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# Planning for interagency cooperation in rural development

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## CARD Report 45

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# PREFACE

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The conclusions of the study are solely those of the authors and should not be considered as necessarily representing the policy or views of the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

# THE NEED FOR COOPERATIVE RELATIONS AMONG ORGANIZATIONS

## Introduction

In complex societies, programs developed and sponsored by formal organizations are a major means through which rational efforts to alleviate social problems are achieved. Formal organization represents the opposite of fate or the unintended outcome of innumerable intentions. Formal organization in these terms refers to the coordination of intentions and actions that makes the actual outcome of an activity correspond more closely to its intended outcome (Warner, 1968). Attempts to plan for rural development activities require an understanding of the formal organizations involved and their degree of willingness to enter into cooperative relations with one another.

An understanding of the willingness of a set of organizations to enter into cooperative relations with one another becomes especially important as the number of development-related organizations increase. A conspicuous aspect of rural development efforts is the proliferation of interested organizations--related and unrelated--operating at various territorial levels, neighborhood, city, county, state and nation. As a result of the proliferation of groups, effective development action becomes dependent upon not only the per-

formance of individual organizations but on the interplay among all relevant organizations. Currently, development activities are being carried out by numerous organizations and each is expected somehow to contribute to the overall development effort. And as rural development is viewed by more people as requiring a "wholistic" approach to deal with the inequities between rural and urban areas, it becomes even more obvious that rural development is larger than the scope of any single organization.

An examination of the array of federal, state, and local development organizations and their programs suggests the magnitude of the problems facing rural areas and the range of means presently available for solving these problems. Contrary to the opinion of some, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is not the only federal agency that offers rural development programs. The Guide to Federal Programs for Rural Development identifies the broad range of programs that are available to rural areas. USDA programs for rural areas include rural housing loans, nonfarm enterprise loans, rural electrification loans and extension programs for improved family living.

Other federal programs related to rural development and the agencies responsible for their delivery include neighborhood centers (Housing and Urban Development), rural mass transportation (Office of Economic Opportunity), employment

services grants (Labor), facility loans for depressed areas (Economic Development Administration), economic opportunity loans (Small Business Administration), Hill-Burton funds (Health, Education and Welfare), and domestic travel promotion (Park Service). Federal programs for rural development are currently being offered by more than fifty different agencies.

A review of the programs offered by agencies in different states reveals the same, although on somewhat of a smaller scale, breadth of services as occurs at the federal level. In Iowa, a review of the Catalog of State Services to Local Governments reveals that at least 60 different programs for improving the quality of life in rural areas are being offered by 17 different agencies (Office of Planning and Programming, 1970.) Examples of a few of these programs are those for the aged (Commission on Aging), rural fire protection equipment (State Conservation Commission), law enforcement planning (Iowa Crime Commission), industrial development assistance (Iowa Development Commission), manpower planning assistance (Iowa State Office of Economic Opportunity) and employment assistance to smaller communities (Iowa Employment Security Commission). Other services include areas related to health, transportation, local government, education and social services. There are 213 state administered programs that are available to local governments through 44

agencies.

Public programs at the federal and state levels represent a major component in rural development planning, but the private sector also provides important inputs. A partial list of groups that have contributed to local development efforts includes: public utility companies, industrial development corporations, chambers of commerce, tourist associations, home builders associations, rural electric cooperatives and private social service agencies.

The problem in rural development activities appears to be more of coordinating the efforts of a set of special-interest organizations than the lack of adequate programs or funding possibilities. Coordination is necessary when administrators attempt to mount a broad based attack on problems and try to overcome the fragmentation of services.

Fragmentation of services often occurs when programs are tailored to fit the needs of special interest groups rather than the total public. An example is the special legislation and funding provided to increase the levels of agricultural production thereby raising the income of individual farmers. Increased mechanization and the greater use of fertilizers and chemicals result in increased production, but also associated with this "advancement" is a decrease in the number of farmers and farm laborers who are a vital part of the economy of small towns and villages. Rather than helping (in the

short run) only the agricultural sector, a more balanced approach would include an equal amount of reseach and financial assistance directed to helping small towns. And rather than the funding and planning being handled by several agencies, one agency might have been assigned the responsibility for both activities.

Currently, different federal agencies offer many of the same kinds of programs, although often to different client systems. Furthermore, some state agency programs tend to duplicate federal programs. Through time, a series of special interest agencies and organizations has emerged and each of these groups must somehow justify their operation to funding groups at the state or federal level. In the past, attempts to encourage groups with similar objectives to work together have often been met with resistence. The fear that cutbacks will occur when it is learned that two or more agencies are working together on a common problem seems to be a real concern among administrators. Although assigning a single agency the responsibility for rural development might yield the best results, it is not likely that such an event will occur. A second alternative, therefore, is to try to understand the problems associated with interorganizational cooperation and develop methods for resolving these problems.

One of the steps recently taken at the federal level to bring greater coordination in rural development activities

was the formation of the Rural Affairs Council. In November 1969, President Nixon announced the formation of this cabinet level council (see appendix I). The council consists of the secretaries of Agriculture; Interior; Commerce; Housing and Urban Development; Health, Education and Welfare; Labor; and the Directors of Office of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of the Budget, and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. Following the president's action, the Secretary of Agriculture established a departmental rural development committee staffed by administrators and deputies of the Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Cooperative Extension Service, Forest Service, and the Rural Electrification Administration (see appendix II). The emphasis in the Secretary's directives was on the need for coordination among existing departmental agencies. An underlying assumption in these directives seemed to be that increased coordination would lead to increased effectiveness in the planning and implementation of rural development programs.

The formation of the USDA Rural Development Committee at the federal level gave increased emphasis to the need for coordination among the USDA agencies currently providing development-related services. Federal and state officials were assigned to assist local leaders in establishing appropriate liaison with other agencies, both public and private, that contribute to the development of local communities. But

the major responsibility for development, according to these directives, was to be placed at the local level.

In response to directives from the USDA, each of the states formed a USDA Rural Development Committee. The types of organizations that were invited to become members of the state committees, however, varied widely from state to state (USDA, 1971). In some states, membership was limited entirely to USDA agencies while in others the USDA agencies constituted less than a fourth of the members. In 78 percent of the committees, USDA agencies were in the majority. About a fourth of the committees had at least one member who represented a non-USDA federal agency and (or) a citizen group. Eighty percent of the committees had at least one state agency as a participating member.

Of the fifty states with rural development committees, 27 percent had established county-level rural development committees in all their counties and just over half (59 percent) had created county-level units in some counties.

In December 1969, a State Rural Development Committee was formed in Iowa. Guidelines for area and county committees were developed by the State USDA Rural Development Committee in April of 1970 (see appendix III). Each of the six general guidelines developed by the State Committee addressed itself to the need for interagency cooperation. The first recommendation called for the local county committee to serve as a

means for joint consideration of rural development needs and to suggest ways to increase the effectiveness of each agency's program. The second recommendation asked the local county committee to support and facilitate developmental activities of private and other public organizations. Included among the possible methods of providing support were development of a broadly representative County Rural Development Committee and assistance to local organizations in the study, analysis and implementation of development projects.

A third guideline suggested the need to assist individuals and communities to obtain services offered by existing agencies. Specifically, the committee is to identify existing programs, to circulate this material to rural clientele, and to refer clients to appropriate agencies. The fourth guideline described the need to examine the adequacy of existing programs and to suggest improvements where needs are not being met. The fifth guideline called for involvement of non-USDA agencies. The final guideline called for the local Committee to collect information about USDA programs and their accomplishments.

Each of these guidelines requires some form of interagency cooperation. Some form of cooperation is needed for communication and joint decision-making among public and private groups. Cooperation also is needed to identify existing programs, to provide new approaches, and to involve public

agencies that are not part of the USDA.

"What is the best way to set up a cooperative development system in which federal, state, and private groups will be willing to participate?" Related to this general question are a series of more specific questions associated with planning for cooperative relations among development related organizations. What problems are likely to arise in conducting cooperative activities among several groups? What alternative strategies can be used to create a council of development organizations? What assurances will administrators need before joining cooperative efforts?

This report is designed to provide answers to some of the questions that are often associated with planning for cooperative relations among organizations. It deals with public and private groups that focus on improving the life chances for rural people. Much of the report will focus on the problems and necessary conditions of organizing groups into larger collectivities e.g., councils or committees. It will evaluate administrators' views about collective action among development groups, and it will consider alternative strategies that might be used to coordinate the activities of community groups.

Four specific objectives of the study are:

1. To ascertain from among a selected set of organizations which public and private organizations participate in

county development programs.

2. To identify the extent of interagency cooperation for these organizations.

3. To identify the factors associated with interagency cooperation.

4. To explore alternatives that may be used to increase cooperative activity among development groups.

# CHAPTER 2

## PROBLEMS OF COOPERATIVE PLANNING AMONG ORGANIZATIONS: A SPECIAL CASE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

Many of the problems associated with planning for cooperative relations among development organizations arise from questions about the scope of rural development activities and from the organizational model used by public agencies. Planning is difficult when the nature of the problem is unclear and when there is little or no consensus among administrators about the scope of the approach that should be used to solve the problem. Planning is made even more difficult when private groups must be mobilized and public administrators are unable to use conventional administrative procedures to insure local involvement and acceptance.

### Scope of Rural Development Activities

Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz (see Butz, 1972) described the range of problems confronting rural America in a recent address. Among the problems he mentioned were: insufficient jobs, inadequate housing, poor roads, inadequate water and sanitation systems, and insufficient schools and cultural opportunities. Programs for dealing with these problems are presently divided among many different federal and state agencies. Private groups also have programs for dealing

with these problems. If each public agency were permitted to pursue its own narrow objectives independent of the objectives of other organizations, rural areas might solve one problem, but at the same time they might intensify other problems. If a private group working independently of other organizations was encouraged and given financial support, the result likely would be one-sided rather than comprehensive.

An example of the results of uncoordinated planning is described in a paper by Kaldor (1972). In describing the trend toward narrower service offerings in rural communities, he reports that with the heavy out-migration from agricultural areas, there has been a reduction in the relative size of the farm market for some of the goods and services offered by rural towns. He also suggested that residents in rural towns experiencing such a decline leave the area in search of better employment opportunities. This trend further reduces the demand for services in the town. Among the more visible of the consequences of the decrease in required services are vacant and abandoned business buildings, unused school rooms, obsolete public capital, and smaller church congregations, as well as the less visible feelings of frustration and hopelessness among residents.

Recently the scope of the rural development problem has been expanded even beyond defining it as a rural problem. Heady (1972) takes the position that rural development is not

a problem that can be solved totally by individual communities, nor is it a problem that can be solved totally by organizations that provide programs for rural people; instead he suggests that the crux of the rural development problem is the unequal distribution of benefits and costs of national economic development. He indicates that the costs and benefits of national development are not distributed in an equitable manner among the various geographic, demographic, sectoral, and economic groups. Some of the inequities between rural and urban America that Heady mentioned include: (a) declining economic opportunities; (b) declining capital values and reduced income; (c) reduction in employment and the number of firms; (d) deteriorating public and consumer services; (e) high costs of public services; (f) erosion of institutions in communities; and (g) unfavorable living conditions. While a few of these conditions reflect subjective evaluations of conditions in rural America, most can be substantiated with data collected on a national level.

If rural development is viewed as a comprehensive process for dealing with inequities between rural and urban areas, the challenges in development involve the identification of the scope of inequities and the provision of adequate means to redress these inequities. Neither task is easy. The first is difficult because administrators are not often trained to recognize the presence of inequities. The second

is difficult because the meanings associated with rural development vary greatly, and, furthermore, they do not seem to be drawing closer together. If anything, rural development seems increasingly to be defined in terms of the specific interests of those who propose the definitions.

Most definitions of rural development emphasize improving the quality of life in rural areas. These definitions are very general and almost any activity could fall within their scope. Among the more general definitions of development are the following:

> Rural Development refers to special efforts to provide expanded farm and nonfarm employment, income opportunities, and more attractive living conditions in nonmetropolitan areas of the nation (Campbell, 1969).

> Rural Development means making attractive opportunities in rural towns and in the countryside so people have a better choice in where they live (Butz, 1972).

> Community Resource Development is a process through which people analyze the situation and identify problems, evaluate the alternatives, and establish and achieve goals that enhance their quality of living (Task Force, Community Resource Development, 1972).

Whether rural development is an end, or a process to achieve a particular end, there tends to be agreement on what needs improving and on which inequities need to be removed. The same, however, cannot be said for the activities which are considered a legitimate part of development. Many of the current definitions of rural development are really descrip-

tions of improvement that certain unspecified activity is designed to accomplish. For example, Secretary Campbell's (1969) Memorandum No. 1667, described the objectives of development as including but not limited to: more jobs, higher income, quality education, modern community services, and efficient units of local government. The President's Task Force on Rural Development (1970) indicated that the purpose of rural development is to create job opportunities, community services, a better quality of living, and an improved social and physical environment in the small cities, towns, villages, and farm communities in rural America. In this same report the goals of development also were described as: bringing jobs, opportunity, and a better life to low income, underemployed people in rural America, not only for their own good, but for the welfare of all Americans. Although administrators who are planning rural development activities have reached some consensus about <u>what</u> needs to be improved, very few here suggested even very general ideas about <u>how</u> these improvements might be achieved.

Kirby (1972), Administrator of the USDA Extension Service, described some of the elements necessary for planning rural development projects. He proposed that rural development is aimed toward a more balanced national growth and is concerned with all of nonmetropolitan America. He indicates that rural development requires an integrated approach, de-

centralized planning and local initiative, and a balanced mix or partnership of government and private effort.

These elements suggest several criteria against which present development efforts can be evaluated. If present development efforts are not successful, can their lack of success be attributed to the absence of one or more of these elements? The position taken in this report is that these elements are necessary for successful development programs. Our discussion will focus, therefore, on the importance of program integration, local initiative, and a balanced mix between public and private sectors.

Although there is not much question about how rural development relates to balanced national growth or that it is aimed at nonmetropolitan areas, the other elements do need further exploration. Integrated and decentralized planning and incorporation of the private sector are difficult tasks, as many previous development efforts have demonstrated.

## Program Integration

Why is an integrated approach necessary? A review of the definitions of rural development suggests that this process and the ends to be achieved are beyond the scope of any single public or private organization. Since it is politically impossible to locate the wide range of programs needed for rural development in any single organization, the typical pattern has been to assign different activities to

specialized agencies. Public and private organizations both have tended to specialize. They identify a specific goal, hire personnel who are competent in a small range of programs, and return each year for appropriate funding and are supported by special interest groups. Since no organization can perform a balanced development function by itself, some process for encouraging individual organizations to cooperate in their activities and programs, therefore, becomes a necessary condition for rural development.

Specialization of organizations often leads to fragmented programs, those aimed at only part of the community. Associated with the increase in specialization of organizations is an increase in the interdependence among units. Although interdependence among agencies has been overlooked, it is as pervasive as the interdependence that occurs among business organizations. Some community agencies and groups provide financial resources; others provide technical assistance, political influence, and legitimation. Individually, they can provide part of the resources necessary for development. Collectively, they can provide a much wider range of services, financial advantages, and community acceptance.

One of the major assumptions governing the development process is that concerted decision-making and cooperative program implementation by several units will lead to higher levels of improvement than will the independent action of the

same organizations. This assumption is very obvious in the recent decisions made by the USDA.

An important caution needs to be discussed here. Increases in the number of and/or amount of cooperation among units involved in development is not being defined as development. Both changes are viewed as means for achieving community development or improvement in quality of living. Cooperative planning among development groups is designed to bring the actual results and intended outcomes closer to- gether. One of the most common but untested assumptions behind the emphasis on cooperation among units is that it will lead to increased effectiveness.

Local Initiative

Why is local initiative necessary? In rural areas, perhaps more than in urban areas, the local agencies of government play an important role in development activities. These agencies draw on the resources, power, and other assets of society at large rather than being limited to the resource-generating capacity of the local community. Rural development, as a consequence, probably will not be successful without the contributions of these organizations. But, all too often, comprehensive plans prepared by specialists in public agencies are rejected by the very persons for whom they were prepared.

Several interest groups are becoming visible and expressing concern about changes being planned for their areas. Private organizations interested in environmental quality are among the strongest of these interest groups. Other private groups are also beginning to demand a role in various government programs including a role in planning rural development programs. Some of the more articulate of the interest groups involved in rural development are farmers and their concern with farm prices; chambers of commerce and/or more specialized industrial development corporations; and civic leaders in small towns with declining populations. Each of these groups often has different interests, each may pursue development for different reasons, and each may use different means for achieving their ends.

One of the apparent shortcomings of many of the present rural development efforts is the lack of opportunity for local residents to influence development plans in their area. At the same time that government leaders are advocating local initiative, they also are organizing committees consisting of government officials to initiate programs and to provide the "catalyst" for development. In spite of this commitment to local leadership, there still seems to be no all-out effort to improve the means for citizen participation and involvement in planning for development. There are residents who serve in USDA agencies, but what is their role in the rural

development program? What steps have been taken to expand agency development committees to include private groups and what have these committees done to make participation more attractive for private groups?

Directives from top administrators in public agencies indicate that the development process is the responsibility of local organizations, groups and leaders. The official approach is to help people to help themselves (Campbell, 1969). Specifically, the instructions to USDA administrators were: (a) to support and guide local leadership in determining the direction for development of its community, (b) to provide appropriate help to local groups in carrying out their development plans, and (c) to assist local leaders to establish appropriate liaison with other agencies and organizations, both public and private, who can contribute to the development of their communities.

Secretary Hardin (1969) indicated that rural development begins at home. He said, "Development is the responsibility of state, and local organizations, groups, and leaders. They will provide the channel through which the people may improve their local needs, assessing their local potentialities, matching their community potential with private and public programs at all levels of government."

Secretary Butz (1972) has reaffirmed this commitment to decentralized planning in the area of rural development. He

indicated that, "The main support for rural development will come from private citizens, local governments, community groups, and business and industries in rural America." The President's Task Force on Rural Development (1970) argued that the strength of rural development is that it mobilizes local energies and is operated by local people who know their own problems, capabilities, and priorities better than anyone else.

Balanced Partnership

Why is a partnership between public and private organizations necessary? Several units are central to the development process. Warner (1971) proposed that institutional agencies--units involved in governmental, economic, educational, and political activities--are at the center of the development effort. He also suggested that, linked to these public organizations, are private groups that offer an important source of ideas, manpower, and finance. He described the need for a balance between public and private associations in the following manner:

> If public organization is the only medium for social development, there is no way to prevent political domination and attendant depression of life changes for large numbers of people. If private organization is the only choice available, there is no way to obtain voluntary support for many kinds of development that are collective or public goods, and especially support with the necessary scale of resources.

Both public and private organizations have unique resources that they can bring to bear on development efforts. Public agencies may bring financial resources via loans and grants that are beyond the scope of local private associations. They also bring personnel trained in skills which are central to any development efforts. The private groups, on the other hand, may bring volunteers -- the individuals who make the changes, who repair the homes and roads and who provide community services. Of equal importance, private groups are composed of local residents who must make commitments and provide the support for any program.

The need for understanding how local organizations relate to each other in developing, administering and implementing programs is acute, especially at a time when the number of programs and of agencies that provide such programs at the local level has grown so rapidly. In many service fields, the number and specialization of programs has become so great that second-order organizations (councils) have been created to control and coordinate the activity of first-order organizations, which provide essential services.

Finally, the need for understanding cooperation between public and private sectors also is important because both of these sectors are demanding increased coordination among themselves and with each other.

Agency Administrative Model

Cooperative planning among public agencies and between public agencies and private associations requires a different organizational model than the one typically used to coordinate relations among government agencies. Cooperative councils or committees that involve agencies from other administrative lines or that involve private groups that have the option of entering or leaving at any time follow a mutual influence rather than a centralized authority pattern.

The approach used to coordinate programs within as well as among public agencies follows a conventional authority pattern. This pattern is characterized by: 1) centralized authority, 2) formally prescribed rules and procedures, 3) set of clearly defined duties for each position and collection of positions or subunit, and 4) financial incentives to motivate participation.

Authority is delegated downward through a series of hierarchical levels. Each position in the hierarchy derives its authority from its relationship to the position immediately above it. In this system of superior-subordinate relationships, each superior holds his subordinates responsible for complying with his instructions. And subordinates in turn look to their superiors for directions as to policy programs, tasks to be completed, personnel to be assigned and measures of success. Coordination is achieved through the operation of

a single line of command that permeates all levels and passes on a set of directives from above to each successive subordinate level.

Standardized policies, tasks and procedures are used to bring greater coordination among the diverse activities and actors. Relations between individuals are formalized through elaborate systems of rules and regulations, standards of performance, and performances are monitored through a systematic record keeping procedure. Coordinating the activities of individuals who are spread over time and space and have different interests is facilitated when all of them follow the same set of policies and procedures so that their performances fit together to improve the total outcome.

Specific tasks and duties are assigned to individuals on the basis of their ability to perform certain operations. Tasks are divided among participants to maximize the use of individual skills especially in situations in which the tasks involve a complex set of operations.

Administrators have several kinds of rewards that can be used to motivate performance in assigned tasks. Included among these rewards are financial incentives e.g., salary and bonuses, promotions and non-economic incentives e.g., status and power. These rewards are distributed to participants according to their position and performance.

Alternative Administrative Model Needed

When rural development is viewed as requiring a broad comprehensive approach and involving a wide range of organizations, the conventional appropriateness of the authority pattern of administration is reduced. An example of a situation where a broad comprehensive approach is being tried is the USDA Rural Development Committee. In some states expansion of the committee has meant the introduction of non-USDA agencies into the decision-making process. Attempts are presently underway to expand other committees at the state and county levels to include other agencies and private groups whose participation is optional and over which the USDA groups have no formal authority. Each non-USDA unit has latitude in terms of its level of participation and the types of contributions that it feels it can make.

Interorganizational councils or committees that consist of groups who enter as a matter of choice tend to assume an influence pattern. There is no single source of authority. Instead, the group operates on the basis of influence and through common agreement. Rather than a system of superior-subordinates, members of councils act as a group of peers in which all are equal in status and power. The source of control is internal to the group and types of control depend on agreements that the members of the group work out among themselves. With the exception of a limited number of informal

sanctions, interorganizational councils lack the range of incentives available in agency situations.

What is the appropriate model of control to follow when the conventional authority pattern is inappropriate? This report attempts to provide some answers to such questions.

# CHAPTER 3

# SAMPLE AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

## Sample Counties

Data reported in this study were obtained in interviews with the top administrator in 169 public and private development-related organizations. The organizations in the study were drawn from 16 counties in Iowa. The counties (see Figure 1) were selected to represent some of the different types of social and economic problems encountered in the state.

Counties were purposively selected to represent the distribution of the state's population living in urban and rural areas. Seventy-six percent of the counties in the state are rural, and 62 percent of the sample counties are rural (see Table 1).

An attempt was made to include counties with different sized populations and counties that had increased, as well as decreased, in size over the last 10 years. The two largest population categories in the sample were 10,000 to 19,999 and 20,000 to 29,999. Thirty-one percent of the sample counties fall in each of these groups. In the state as a whole, the two largest population categories are of the same magnitude as those in the sample but have slightly different percentages (48 and 18 percent respectively).

Figure 1. Counties Included in Rural Development Study

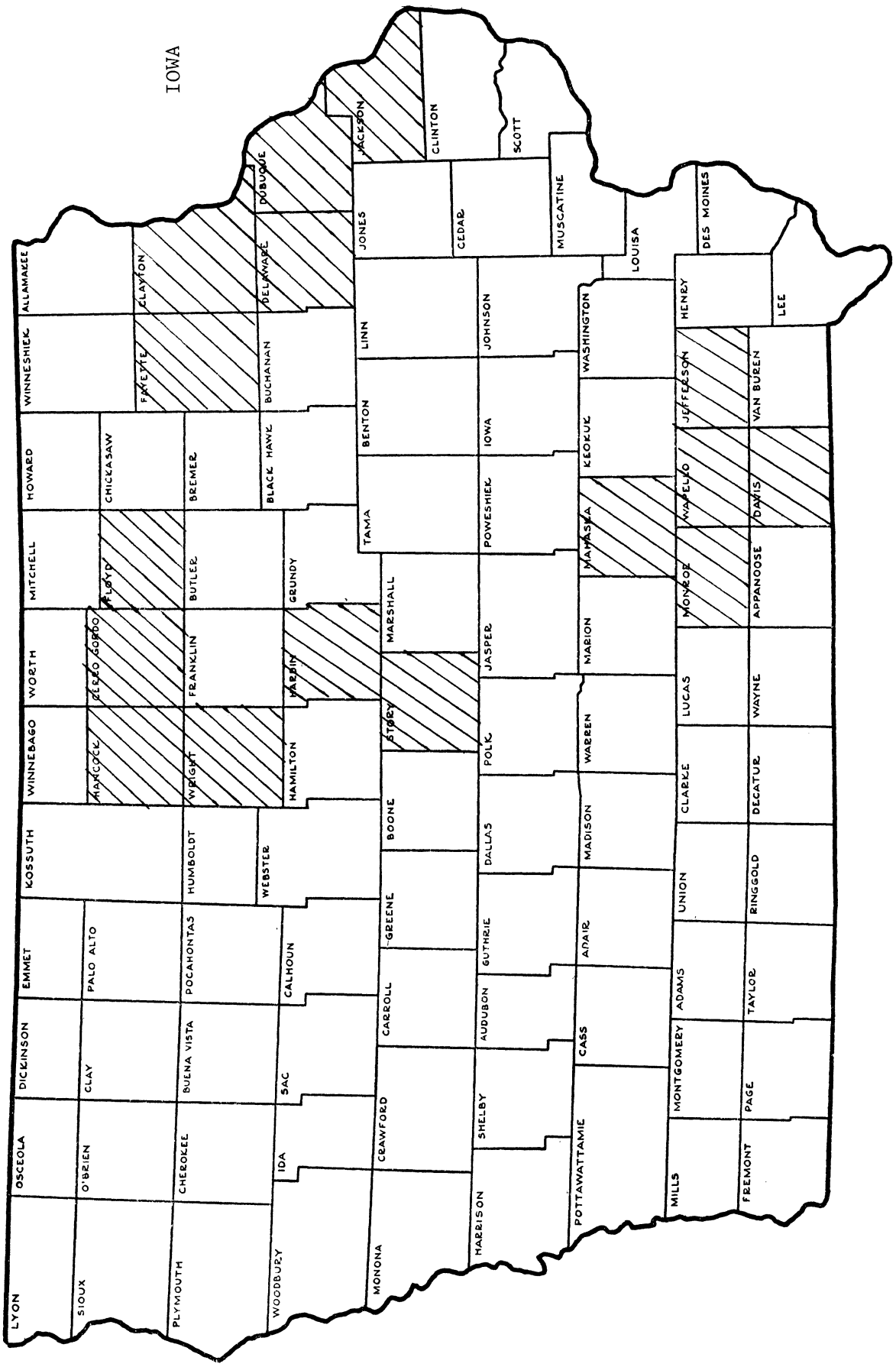

Table 1. Comparison of Selected Statistics in Sample Counties with Total State

| Population Size | Sample Counties | | State | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 0 - 9,999 | 2 | 12.5 | 15 | 15.2 |
| 10,000 - 19,999 | 5 | 31.2 | 48 | 48.5 |
| 20,000 - 29,999 | 5 | 31.2 | 18 | 18.2 |
| 30,000 - 39,999 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 2.0 |
| 40,000 - 49,999 | 2 | 12.5 | 6 | 6.0 |
| 50,000 - 59,999 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.0 |
| 60,000 - 69,999 | 1 | 6.3 | 1 | 1.0 |
| 70,000 - 79,999 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.0 |
| 80,000 - + | 1 | 6.3 | 7 | 7.1 |
| **Population Change** | **Sample Counties** | | **State** | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 10% increase or more | 2 | 12.5 | 6 | 6.0 |
| 0 - 10% increase | 2 | 12.5 | 15 | 15.2 |
| 0 - 10% decrease | 9 | 56.2 | 51 | 51.2 |
| 10% decrease or more | 3 | 18.8 | 27 | 27.3 |
| **Rural-Urban Residence** | **Sample Counties** | | **State** | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Urban Counties | 6 | 38.0 | 24 | 24.2 |
| Rural Counties | 10 | 62.0 | 75 | 75.8 |
| **Poverty Level** | **Sample Counties** | | **State** | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 0 - 20% | 1 | 6.3 | 7 | 7.1 |
| 21 - 30% | 7 | 43.7 | 64 | 64.6 |
| 31 - 40% | 8 | 50.0 | 26 | 26.3 |
| 41 - +% | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 2.0 |

It was assumed that counties experiencing a population decline might assign different priorities and use different development approaches than counties where the problems and needs might not be as acute or visible. Therefore, approximately the same proportion of counties with a declining population as occurred in the total state were selected. For the state as a whole, the 0 to 10 percent population decrease category had the largest number of counties (51 percent). Thus, the largest proportion of the sample counties was selected from this same category, yielding 9 counties or 56 percent of the sample.

We attempted to select counties from a range of poverty levels that approximate the pattern for the entire state. The counties included in the study are over-representative of counties with larger percentages of residents living below the poverty level. Twenty-six percent of the counties in the state are in the 31 to 40 percent-below-poverty guideline category, but 50 percent of the sample counties are in this same range.

One final consideration influenced the selection of sample counties. We were interested in comparing counties experiencing substantial growth with those losing population. Three of the major growth centers in the state were identified (Mason City, Ottumwa, and Dubuque). These areas, plus the counties immediately adjacent to these areas, were stud-

ied. The results of these comparisons go beyond the scope of this study and will be discussed in later reports.

Sample of Organizations

In each of the counties, 16 organizations were purposively selected for study. Organizations were included if they met two criteria: (1) they were currently participating in, or offered a potential for participating in, development activities, and (2) they had countywide responsibility in their programming. Organizations participating in, or having potential for participation, in development were determined through interviews with community resource development specialists, local rural development committees, and other individuals knowledgeable about the development process and activity. Organizations offering countywide programs were determined by a review of the territory over which each is responsible. Organizations with programs limited to a single community in the county were not included except for the one exception noted below.

The organizations studied were categorized into three groups. These groups and the number of organizations in each are as follows: USDA agencies included the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (16), Soil Conservation Service (16), Cooperative Extension Service (16), and Farmers Home Administration (14). The state and county agencies included welfare (16), forest service (5), conservation board

(13), planning and zoning (6), employment (8), community action agencies (6), and county supervisors (15). The private associations included: Rural electric cooperatives (9), Farm Bureau (16), bankers' associations (9), ministerial associations (6), and industrial development corporations (13). The industrial development corporations in the county-seat towns were included in the study even though they did not meet the criteria of being countywide organizations. Since industrial development groups play an important role in county development, we were interested in the extent to which they were participating in the larger development system. Data from the county board of supervisors appears in the chapter on priorities but not in any other chapters because of their organizational size and complexity.

Once the organizations had been selected for the study, county organizations with state offices were contacted. State level administrators in each of these organizations were contacted and, in all cases, agreed to cooperate by sending a letter to their local county offices informing the county administrators of the study and requesting his or her support. The researchers then mailed letters to the local county administrator of each organization telling him about the study and its objectives and asking for his cooperation. The administrator in each organization was informed that a questionnaire would be mailed him, and he was asked to fill it out

before an interview would be held. Interviews were held with the top administrator of each of the organizations.

Some of the organizations in the study operate on a multi-county rather than on a county basis. Employment and community action agencies are examples of this arrangement. When an organization was set up on an multi-county basis, we interviewed the administrator in the sample county if there was an office located in the county. If there was no office in the county, but one was located in an adjoining county and this office had jurisdiction for the sample county, we interviewed the administrator about the sample county. When an area office was located in a sample county, we asked the administrator to respond only for that county, even though he had jurisdiction in other counties as well.

# CHAPTER 4

## NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

Cooperation among organizations is dependent upon a number of conditions. First, administrators must arrive at a common definition of a problem area and the appropriate methods for solving the problem. Second, external as well as internal commitments to rural development will have to be made by appropriate organizations. Development groups may be willing to commit resources to their own "development" programs, but at the same time they may be unwilling to commit resources to an interagency project. Third, information about costs, authority, responsibility and benefits of interagency projects will be needed to give to prospective development groups. Administrators are likely to ask for these types of information before they decide to participate. Fourth, a certain degree of consensus must exist among administrators about which groups should participate in local development activities. Cooperation among groups may be limited if participants cannot agree among themselves about which groups have the "right" to participate in development activities.

Definitions of Rural Development

Cooperation among development groups depends upon their reaching some agreement as to what constitutes rural development. In short, cooperation among development organizations will be difficult to achieve when administrators do not agree on the meaning of development.

To discover the range of meanings associated with the term "rural development" and to identify groups in which common definitions are used, we asked each administrator, "How would you define rural development?" For purposes of reporting the data, these definitions were classified into a series of general categories. Table 2 shows the percentage of administrators, by type of organization, who gave definitions of rural development that fell into each category. Some administrators mentioned more than one idea, so the total number of responses was greater than the number of respondents.

A wide range of definitions was given by administrators. Most of the definitions were quite abstract and referred to general improvements in the economy, the community, agriculture, and industry. A smaller number of administrators defined rural development in more specific terms such as recreation, housing, conservation, services to the disadvantaged, and employment.

Table 2. Administrators Definitions of Rural Development Categorized in General and Specific Terms

| Definitions of Development | Organizational Type (Percentage) USDA Agencies (N = 60) | State-County (N = 53) | Private Associations (N = 50) |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Categories | | | |
| Economic Development | 67 | 42 | 50 |
| Community Resource Development | 18 | 15 | 12 |
| Human Resource Development | 15 | 6 | 6 |
| Agricultural Development | 10 | 8 | 18 |
| Industrial Development | 5 | 10 | 18 |
| Specific Categories | | | |
| Recreation and Tourism | 10 | 15 | 2 |
| Housing | 0 | 8 | 2 |
| Conservation and Land Use | 10 | 9 | 2 |
| Services to Disadvantaged | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Employment Opportunities | 2 | 2 | 4 |

The most frequently mentioned category contained statements relating to our category -- economic development. Some of the definitions placed in this category were: economic progress in rural areas; improve financial status of rural areas; and raise the standard of living. Community resource development, the second most frequently mentioned category, included ideas such as: improve aspects of the rural community; make the community a better place in which to live, to play, to work, and to retire. Human resource development included statements such as improved opportunities for youth and increased involvement of residents in community programs. The agricultural development category included statements about improvements for farmers such as: furthering actions and programs to benefit those engaged in agriculture and improving farm conditions and opportunities. Each of the specific categories included narrower definitions of development than did the general categories and was usually limited to a single area of focus.

Among the USDA agencies, the most frequently mentioned definitions related to improvements in economic conditions (67 percent). This same category was also used by 42 percent of the administrators of state-county agencies and 50 percent of the private administrators. The next most frequently used category included references to community resource development. Among the USDA administrators, 18 percent made some

reference to community resource development in their definitions, and 15 percent of the state-county administrators defined development in these same terms. Community resource development was mentioned third most frequently among the private groups.

USDA agency administrators defined development in terms of human resource development, agricultural development, recreation and tourism and conservation. State-county administrators also defined development in terms of recreation, tourism and industrial development, but they tended to put less emphasis on resource development and more on industrialization and housing. Among the private groups, items relating to agricultural and industrial development were mentioned second and third after the more general category of economic development.

Overall, there tended to be some agreement among the administrators about the nature of rural development. The definitions most frequently used referred to general ends to be achieved. Very few administrators mentioned processes whereby these desired ends could be reached. The highest consensus among the administrators tended to occur in the general areas of agricultural, community, and economic development. There were areas in which each category of organizations stood apart from the other two. Human resource development for USDA, housing and services for disadvantaged for state-county

groups, and agricultural and industrial development for the private groups are examples of these differences. The range of definitions offered by these administrators pointed up some basic differences with respect to their approach to rural development.

Since groups that share a common definition will be more likely to cooperate in development than those holding different views, some areas in which cooperation could be successful are suggested in the data. Development programs designed to improve the economic and living conditions of those living in rural areas could be expected to achieve higher levels of cooperation among the various groups studied. Cooperative industrial development, on the other hand, might be less well-received among USDA administrators than among the other groups since industrial development was mentioned by only a small member of administrators.

Rural Development Activities

Cooperation among development groups depends upon the ability of such groups to complement each other's programming efforts. Therefore, any attempts to recruit groups to participate in interorganizational projects must necessarily begin with the identification of other groups in the county that provide services related to the proposed joint activity.

We asked administrators, "Would you say your organization is presently involved in development activities in this county? If yes, which ones?" The development activities reported by the administrators were categorized into general and specific types of activities for purposes of data presentation. Unlike the responses to the previous question about definitions, responses to this question tended to be more concrete or specific. Table 3 shows that, among the USDA administrators, the most frequently mentioned development activity related to some aspect of agricultural development (37 percent). The second most frequently mentioned type of activity related to the conservation of natural resources category (35 percent). The third and fourth most frequently mentioned development activities related to housing (22 percent), sanitation (15 percent), and to rural development committee activity (15 percent).

There tended to be very little similarity between activities in which USDA agencies participated and those in which state-county agencies were involved. The greatest overlap occurred in the areas of housing and planning. The most frequently mentioned development activity for state-county agencies related to recreation and tourism (33 percent). The second and third most frequently mentioned activities referred to employment opportunities (19 percent) and to health and welfare (17 percent).

Table 3. Percentage of Administrators Who Indicated Their Unit was Involved in Selected Development Categories

| Development Activities | Organizational Type (Percentage) USDA Agencies (N = 46) | State-County (N = 42) | Private Associations (N = 26) |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Categories | | | |
| Community Resources | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Agriculture | 37 | 0 | 19 |
| Industrial | 4 | 5 | 39 |
| Specific Categories | | | |
| Recreation and Tourism | 11 | 33 | 12 |
| Housing | 22 | 14 | 4 |
| Conservation and Land Use | 35 | 10 | 8 |
| Employment Opportunities | 2 | 19 | 15 |
| Rural Development Committee | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| Planning and Zoning | 9 | 12 | 4 |
| Health and Welfare | 4 | 17 | 4 |
| Electricity | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Education | 9 | 0 | 8 |
| Sanitation | 15 | 2 | 0 |

The largest degree of overlap between state-county agencies and private associations related to employment opportunities and recreation. Unlike the other two groups of organizations, the main development activity reported for the private associations was industrial development (39 percent). There was also some overlap between USDA and private groups in activities classified as agricultural development.

If development organizations are to cooperate with one another, they need to identify common areas of interest and concern. The data seems to suggest, however, that each general category of organization is involved in activities closely related to their own immediate goals or objectives. USDA agencies tended to be involved in activities classified as agricultural development and to conservation and land use. State-county agencies were involved in providing recreation, employment, and health services. These areas, however, received little attention from the USDA agencies. The private groups were involved in attempts to attract new industry and to improve employment opportunities. Neither of these activities received much attention from the USDA agencies or from state-county groups.

## Types of Interorganizational Development Programs

The probability of attracting new groups into a cooperative development program will be higher among groups that have had some previous experience in such activities than it

will be among groups with less experience in cooperative efforts. Which groups have had the most experience, and in which types of activities have these groups been able to cooperate?

We asked administrators, "Has your unit been involved in any inter-agency program or project related to development in your county? If yes, which one(s)?" For those administrators who indicated involvement, we asked about the nature of their projects and we arranged their responses into the categories shown in Table 4.

The heaviest concentration of interagency activity among USDA agencies related to participation in the county rural development committees. Two-fifths of the USDA administrators reported committee activity as one of their interagency efforts. The second most often mentioned interagency projects related to health and welfare and sanitation. USDA agencies also reported some involvement in conservation, recreation, and general agriculture projects with other units. Many of these more specific activities may have been conducted within the context of the rural development committees mentioned above. The USDA units as a group reported four times as many interagency project contacts as did the private associations and twice as many contacts as did the state-county groups.

The state-county units tended to report a lower level of involvement in interagency development projects than did the

Table 4. Percentage of Administrators Who Indicated Their Unit was Involved in Selected Interagency Activities or Programs

| Interagency Development Activities | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 58) | State County (N = 43) | Private Associations (N = 23) |
| General Categories | | | |
| Community Resources | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Agriculture | 12 | 0 | 4 |
| Industrial | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Specific Categories | | | |
| Recreation and Tourism | 12 | 14 | 9 |
| Housing | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Conservation and Land Use | 14 | 9 | 0 |
| Employment Opportunities | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| Rural Development Committee | 41 | 7 | 13 |
| Planning and Zoning | 4 | 12 | 9 |
| Health and Welfare | 16 | 33 | 9 |
| Educational | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Sanitation | 16 | 2 | 4 |

USDA, but a higher level than did the private groups. The most frequently mentioned cooperative activities among the state-county groups related to health and welfare, recreation and tourism, and planning and zoning. Generally, however, there was little similarity between the USDA and state-county agencies with respect to the type of development projects in which they cooperated with other groups.

The private groups reported an even smaller number of interagency projects than did the USDA and state-county groups. The largest amount of interagency involvement among the associations was participation in a county rural development committee. The second most frequently mentioned areas were health and welfare, recreation, and planning and zoning.

Some examples of interagency projects in which organizations had participated included: meals on wheels, resource and conservation development projects, civil defense committees, rural development committees, health councils, emergency food and medical programs, soil surveys, labor surveys, and regional planning commissions.

In summary, the definitions of rural development, activities associated with development efforts, and types of interagency development programs varied widely. There was a small degree of consensus among the administrators as to the means and goals of development. and there were areas in which disagreements about procedures and goals were found.

The involvement of several groups and the resources which they make available may be an advantage to rural development efforts, but additional problems may also arise. John S. Bottom (1972) has characterized the present rural development system in the following manner:

> I'm continually impressed with the observation that most departments and most agency efforts in rural development focus on getting programs SOLD to the community--promoting their own grant, loan or technical assistance programs. Many begin to view these programs as the sum total of community development.

The tendency seems to exist for administrators to define rural development in terms of their own organization's special activities or programs.

The lack of a concise definition of rural development permits administrators a great deal of latitude in defining their role in development. Furthermore, it permits the administrator some flexibility in programming since there is no well- defined set of development activities. Administrators who are instructed to participate in development activities can go at least two ways. They can be innovative, create new programs, increase staff, and enlarge their budgets all in the name of rural development, or they can continue to provide their own programs and argue that these represent development programs.

Excessive precision in the definition of development, on the other hand, might hinder experiments and innovative pro-

qrams by orqanizations, but at the same time, it makes an aqency's contribution or lack of contribution to development more visible to interested qroups such as administrators or the public.

When development is defined in different ways by different people, development proqrams may be able to accommodate diverse and at times inconsistent proqrams. In the absence of a set of clear objectives it is possible to form a development council made up of representatives from industrial development corporations and representatives of local groups who are workinq to develop and protect natural resources.

The intanqible nature of development goals permits flexibility in an orqanization's structure, goals, and proqrams. Administrators have a qreater latitude in adjustinq their proqrams to changes in their social environment.

There also are certain disadvantaqes associated with the abstract or intanqible nature of development qoals. (Warner and Havens, 1968). Residents in an area might take these statements about improvements seriously and expect visible chanqes in the short run. Administrators may find some difficulty in showinq that the expected chanqes have occurred in their area. Increased flexibility in proqramminq also has a counterpart--ambiquity at times produces anxiety and frustration amonq personnel. Administrators may find that a lack of precision associated with the rural development process may

have heavy costs. One of these costs is the danger of misreading what their superiors or local residents expect of their organization.

Finally, the lack of precisely defined goals or objectives makes it difficult to evaluate agency programs. One of the difficulties in determining the degree of success of development programs is the inability of superiors and residents alike to evaluate or assess the performance of development units or committees. Until performance can be assessed, it will not be possible to say with any degree of confidence whether a particular program's activities or approach has been successful.

Intraorganizational Commitment to Rural Development

Before organizations can be expected to participate in cooperative development efforts, some commitment to development *per se* must be present (Klonglan and Paulson, 1971). Inviting an organization to participate in development activities may not be successful if the group does not feel that it should be involved in this type of activity. If an organization has made some type of commitment to development related programs within its own system, the probability of its participation in interorganizational projects could be expected to be higher.

We asked administrators, "Is your unit involved in any rural development activities?" If they indicated that they were not involved, we asked, "In terms of the goals and activities of your organization as it now exists do you believe your unit should, in any way either now or in the future become involved in development activities in this county?"

Table 5 shows that among the organizations studied, four-fifths of the administrators reported involvement in some rural development activity. An additional 12 percent of the administrators indicated that, although they presently were not involved in development, they should be. Out of the 169 units studied, 96 percent reported either current involvement or, based on statements by the administrators, a "potential for involvement" in rural development.

USDA agencies had the largest percentage (95 percent) of units presently involved in development. The lowest percentage of units involved occurred among the private organizations. However, this figure was still at the 68 percent level. although the current levels of intraorganizational commitment varied among the groups, there tended to be little difference when current plus potential levels were combined.

The data in Table 5 show that a large proportion of the organizations were already involved in rural development. But of even greater importance in terms of planning for development, groups in the private sector with lowest current levels

of involvement felt that they should be involved. Two implications can be constructed from this data. In the past, private units have not been encouraged or invited to participate in development activities. Or in a more positive light, the private sector contains several groups that would participate in rural development activities if the opportunity were presented.

Interorganizational Commitment to Rural Development

Even though groups may contribute to development through their own unique programs, they may not be willing to participate with other units in a joint effort where they would be expected to share the costs, or where their own programs might be affected.

We asked each administrator, "Has your unit been involved in any interagency program or project related to development in your county?" If they indicated their unit was not involved, we asked, "In the future, do you feel that your unit would in any way be willing to either participate in, or contribute resources to, an interagency development program?" Table 6 shows the percentage of each category of organizations actually or potentially involved in interagency projects.

Levels of interorganizational commitment to rural development were not as high as were the levels of intraorganizational commitment (72 and 84 percent, respec-

Table 5. Level of Intra-agency Commitment to Rural Development by Organizational Type

| Intra-agency Commitment to Rural Development | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 53) | Total Organizations (N = 169) |
| Our unit is presently involved in rural development. | 95.2 | 87.0 | 67.9 | 84.0 |
| Our unit is not presently involved in rural development but should be involved. | 3.2 | 9.3 | 24.5 | 11.8 |
| Actual plus potential involvement in rural development. | 98.4 | 96.3 | 92.4 | 95.8 |

Table 6. Level of Interagency Commitment to Rural Development by Organizational Type

| Interagency Commitment to Rural Development | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 53) | Total Organizations (N = 169) |
| Our unit has been involved in an interagency program or project | 93.5 | 75.9 | 43.4 | 72.2 |
| Our unit has not been involved but should be. | 6.5 | 20.4 | 47.2 | 23.7 |
| Actual plus potential involvement in interagency programs or projects | 100.0 | 96.3 | 90.6 | 95.8 |

tively). But past involvement plus potential levels of intraorganizational and interorganizational involvement for all units occurred at the same level (96 percent). The two total figures were brought close together by including those units not presently involved in an interagency program but would be willing to contribute to such an effort.

As expected, USDA agencies reported the highest levels of interagency commitment. Over the past several years there have been numerous committee systems including the USDA Technical Action Panels and the USDA Rural Development Committees. The public agencies as a whole participated more frequently in joint programs than did the private groups. With respect to the private groups, the data show that, although less than half of them were involved in joint programs or projects, the majority of those not presently involved would be willing to participate in an interagency program. The probability of bringing the private sector into the development process in conjunction with the public sector seems to be quite high for the groups included in this study.

Assurances Needed to Attract Units into Interagency Programs

Some attempts to attract groups into interagency cooperation are apt to be met initially with resistance. Administrators past experiences in similar activities may not have been rewarding or the uncertainties associated with such a decision may be too large.

Previous research (Mott, 1968) suggests that when an administrator is invited to join an interagency program, he is likely to ask: Who will have authority? What will be our unit's responsibility? What are the goals and objectives of the project and are they consistent with our own? How will recognition be given to participants? And what will be our costs? With these questions in mind we asked administrators, "If a new interagency program were created, what information do you believe your unit would need to know to decide whether it would or would not participate in such a program?"

The greatest concern (shown in Table 7) expressed by the total group of administrators centered around the goals of the interagency program. They would need assurance that the program goals would be compatible with their own unit's goals. This was slightly more important for the USDA agencies (93 percent) than for the other categories. The second largest category expressed concern related to the costs of the program (84 percent). Financial costs, staff time, materials, or use of equipment, as well as the increased possibility that other groups might now influence their decision-making, may all be relevant cost factors. The private organizations tended to be more concerned with program costs than were either of the public agency categories.

The third most frequently mentioned concern dealt with the issue of responsibility for program operation (67 per-

Table 7. Assurances That Must be Given to Administrators Before They Will Participate in a Hypothetical New Interagency Program

| Assurances Needed By Administrators | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 56) | State-County (N = 53) | Private Associations (N = 52) | Total Organizations (N = 161) |
| That program goals are similar to those of our organization. | 92.9 | 83.0 | 80.8 | 85.7 |
| Of the detailed costs of the program. | 73.2 | 80.8 | 98.1 | 83.8 |
| That our organization would have clear responsibility for programs. | 73.2 | 66.0 | 61.5 | 67.1 |
| That public recognition will be distributed among the organizations. | 42.9 | 60.4 | 55.8 | 52.8 |
| That our organization would have some administrative authority for the program. | 41.1 | 43.4 | 50.0 | 44.7 |

cent). When several agencies agree to work together, some type of division of labor is usually arranged. This is often done by reaching agreements among the parties involved about clients, services performed, or geographical areas to be served. If agreements about which groups will provide services can be reached, the whole client (whether it is a person, a community, or a county) rather than fragmented parts of the client, is more apt to be served. Concern about specific responsibility was slightly higher among the USDA agencies than among the other categories.

The fourth most frequently mentioned concern was how recognition would be distributed among the participants. The state-county agencies expressed the greatest concern in this area (60 percent) and the USDA agencies the least (43 percent). Although it may not be a major issue for some organizations, others may need assurances that public recognition will be given to each of the units involved in a cooperative program.

The least crucial of the issues studied is whether an organization will have some administrative authority for the program. Less than half of the administrators rated this as an area of concern. Each of the three groups held about the same views on this matter.

Several implications can be drawn from the data presented previously that may be important for effective coopera-

tion. First, it is important to define the goals and objectives of an interagency effort. Second, once goals are specified, it is important that other groups become aware of these goals and the means by which they will be achieved. Administrators will want to know whether some modification of their organization's unit will be necessary. Third, in addition to identifying the various costs of involvement, it is important that the benefits of interorganizational activity be clarified. The committee may serve as a sounding board for ideas; it may increase administrators' awareness of the objectives of other organizations; it may reduce threats from interest groups in the county; it may improve exchange of information between units, or it may increase organizational effectiveness.

Fourth, a strategy for applying the resources of each organization to the best advantage for the group to be served (e.g., individual, community, or county) will have to be developed. And fifth, whenever success is achieved, credit will need to be shared by all organizations involved.

Organizational Domain

Another condition, which often influences cooperation among organizations, is the amount of consensus or agreement among administrators about the right of different groups in the county to participate in specific issues (Klonglan and Paulson, 1971). We refer to this agreement as domain consen-

sus when a large number of administrators agree that a particular organization "should" be involved in development activities. When administrators are involved in an interorganizational development project, we would expect that basic problems in cooperation will occur until all of the members agree that each group in the project should be involved. Furthermore, attempts to expand on-going development groups may also experience difficulty in securing cooperation among administrators until questions about which groups should be involved have been resolved.

We provided each administrator with a list of 17 county-wide organizations that in the past had been involved in some aspect of rural development. We asked each administrator, "Which of these organizations do you think should be involved in development?" The five response categories ranged from "definitely should be involved," to "definitely should not be involved." For our analysis, only the "definitely should be involved" response was used since it seemed to discriminate best among the respondents. The distribution of responses is shown in Table 8.

Although there was a relatively high degree of consensus overall about which units should be involved in development, there were also some noticeable differences among each of the categories of organizations. The Cooperative Extension Service and the County Board of Supervisors received the largest

Table 8. Organizations Which "Definitely Should" Be Involved in County Development by Organizational Type

| Organizations | Organizational Type (Percentage) USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 53[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53[a]) | Total (N = 169[a]) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| USDA | | | | |
| Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service | 77.4 | 47.2 | 32.1 | 53.6 |
| Soil Conservation Service | 83.9 | 49.1 | 45.3 | 60.7 |
| Cooperative Extension Service | 93.5 | 56.6 | 54.7 | 69.6 |
| Farmers Home Administration | 79.0 | 39.6 | 45.3 | 56.0 |
| State and County Agencies | | | | |
| Board of Supervisors | 75.4 | 73.6 | 57.7 | 69.3 |
| District Forester | 65.0 | 45.0 | 26.8 | 48.2 |
| County Conservation Board | 53.4 | 49.0 | 43.1 | 48.8 |
| County Welfare | 38.7 | 47.2 | 28.3 | 38.1 |
| Community Action Program | 32.3 | 42.0 | 30.0 | 34.6 |
| Employment Service | 37.1 | 54.7 | 42.3 | 44.3 |
| County Planning Commission | 71.9 | 65.3 | 68.8 | 68.8 |
| Private Associations | | | | |
| County Ministerial Society | 27.8 | 40.8 | 20.0 | 29.4 |
| County Medical Society | 18.0 | 38.5 | 25.0 | 26.7 |
| County Bankers' Association | 50.8 | 37.7 | 53.8 | 47.6 |
| Rural Electric Cooperatives | 37.7 | 26.9 | 39.6 | 34.9 |
| County Farm Bureau | 16.1 | 26.4 | 35.8 | 25.6 |
| Industrial Development Corporation | 56.5 | 57.7 | 67.9 | 60.5 |

[a] The number of respondents varies downward slightly because of missing data.

number of "definitely should" choices from the total set of respondents. The County Planning Commission and/or Zoning Commission was third; the Soil Conservation Service was fourth; and industrial development corporations were mentioned fifth.

Among the groups which received the lowest number of "definitely should" choices were the county Farm Bureau, the Medical Society and the Ministerial Association. Some of the less frequently mentioned groups were not present in each county and this may have lowered the number of times they were mentioned. Because administrators from these units were not answering the question about who should be involved, and (or) since these units did not exist in all counties, they might not have been relevant to some of the administrators. It should be noted, however, that even though county planning commissions occurred in only 6 of the counties studied, they still were viewed as an important organization in development efforts.

One of the patterns that seemed to emerge when the responses of the three groups of organizations were compared was that administrators in each of the categories tended to mention their own and similar types of organizations more frequently than did administrators of units in other categories. USDA administrators placed themselves in the development arena nearly twice as frequently as they were placed in

this arena by the other two groups. In a similar manner, the state-county administrators tended to mention their units with about the same frequency as the USDA administrators mentioned them, but more frequently than did administrators of private groups. Administrators of private groups mentioned their own units more frequently than did administrators of either of the other two groups.

The number of times private groups were mentioned by all three categories of organizations was lower than for the state-county units and for the USDA units. With only a couple of exceptions, the USDA administrators gave fewer choices to private groups than to all other groups. With only a single exception (industrial development corporations) the state-county administrators replied that their own groups should be involved in development more frequently than they indicated the private groups should be involved.

The most frequently mentioned organizations among the state-county group were the board of supervisors and the planning commission. Among private groups, the local industrial development corporations and the county bankers associations received the largest number of mentions.

For development groups in the process of forming or expanding, the organizations mentioned most frequently in Table 7 would seem to be appropriate candidates for inclusion. Groups with political influence and financial resources were

mentioned most frequently by administrators. Both resources could be helpful in most development projects.

Another observation suggested by these responses is that, although the USDA agencies view their programs as being central to rural development, other administrators in these counties did not share this view with equal strength. With the exception of the Cooperative Extension Service, less than half of the administrators of private associations felt that USDA agencies definitely should be involved with development in their county.

# CHAPTER 5

## PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

### Introduction

To evaluate the current position of, and the future outlook for planning cooperative development activities, an assessment of the priorities for development perceived by the leadership of development organizations is important. By identifying administrators' priorities for development, we should be able to understand current development efforts underway in an area. Identifying areas that administrators believe should receive priority in a county may provide indications of activities that should be taken into account in future development planning. A comparison of the activities being given priority with the activities that should receive priority may help planners detect whether the priorities in counties are in line with the perceived needs of counties.

In this chapter, administrators' judgements about which activities "are being given" and "should be given" priority are examined. No attempt was made to check the validity of the perceived priorities against on-going activities or needs in the county.

Administrators were provided a list of 17 activities and asked, "Which of these do you feel has the highest priority in your county?" Then each was asked to select the activities

receiving the second, third, fourth, and fifth priority. Rankings 1 to 5 were combined in Tables 9 and 10 to reflect the frequency of times each activity was ranked as opposed to unranked.

Perceptions of Areas Currently Receiving Priority

The data in Table 9 show that "schools and education" was mentioned more frequently as receiving priority than were all other items. The largest percentage of respondents ranking this activity occurred among the state-county administrators followed by private and USDA administrators.

The second and third priority areas were agricultural activities with farmers and agricultural related business and industry. The USDA administrators mentioned agricultural activities with farmers more frequently than did the other two groups. Agricultural related business and industry was mentioned with nearly equal frequency by USDA and private administrators, but the state-county groups listed this area less frequently. Water and sewer facilities and health facilities or services were mentioned fourth and fifth, respectively, and received about the same number of mentions among public and private administrators.

Among the areas mentioned least frequently were emphasis on local initiative, training and retraining of workers, and familiarizing citizens with resources for development. There was little variation among the different administrators about

Table 9. Percent of Organizational Administrators Who Ranked Activities as Currently Receiving Priority in their County

| Activities Currently Receiving Priority | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53) | Total Organizations (N = 169[a]) |
| Schools and Education | 59.7 | 80.8 | 66.0 | 68.3 |
| Agricultural Activities with Farmers | 77.4 | 40.4 | 50.9 | 57.5 |
| Agricultural Related Business and Industry | 53.2 | 32.7 | 54.7 | 47.3 |
| Water and Sewer Facilities | 35.5 | 30.8 | 35.8 | 34.1 |
| Health Facilities or Services | 33.9 | 36.5 | 30.2 | 33.5 |
| Employment Opportunities | 16.1 | 40.4 | 41.5 | 31.7 |
| Housing | 35.5 | 28.8 | 26.4 | 30.5 |
| Land Use and Treatment | 40.3 | 19.2 | 28.3 | 29.9 |
| Recreation or Tourist Enterprises | 25.8 | 30.8 | 32.1 | 29.3 |
| Development and Protection of Natural Resources | 32.3 | 26.9 | 18.9 | 26.3 |
| Other Business or Industry | 19.4 | 34.6 | 22.6 | 25.1 |
| Youth Opportunities | 9.7 | 25.0 | 20.8 | 18.0 |
| Transportation Facilities | 4.8 | 13.5 | 13.2 | 10.2 |
| Food, Nutrition, and Home Management | 14.5 | 5.8 | 7.5 | 9.6 |
| Familiarize Citizens with Resources for Development | 8.1 | 9.6 | 7.5 | 8.4 |
| Training or Retraining of Workers | 4.8 | 7.7 | 11.3 | 7.8 |
| Emphasis on Local Initiative | 6.5 | 5.8 | 3.8 | 5.4 |

[a]Number of organizations varies downward slightly because of missing data.

the ranking of these three areas. The issues on which the greatest differences between the administrators of the various organizations seemed to occur were: agricultural activities with farmers, land use and treatment, and employment opportunities.

Perceptions of Areas Currently Needing Priority

Table 10 shows that "schools and education" was mentioned more frequently than all other issues as one that should receive priority. Over one-half (53 percent) of the administrators felt that schools and education should be a priority activity. All three categories of administrators rated this activity with nearly the same frequency. Agricultural activities with farmers, which had been ranked second as an activity receiving priority, was replaced by employment opportunities as the second most often mentioned area that should receive priority. Employment opportunities had been ranked sixth as an area currently receiving priority, but was rated second as an area needing priority. A comparison of the assignment of priority by the three categories of administrators showed that the state-county and private association administrators gave nearly one-half of their total priority rankings to employment opportunities, but about one-third of the USDA administrators rated employment as an area that currently should receive priority.

Table 10. Percent of Organizational Administrators Who Ranked Activities as Currently Needing Priority in their County

| Activities Currently Needing Priority | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 53) | Total Organizations (N = 169) |
| Schools and Education | 50.0 | 57.4 | 52.8 | 53.3 |
| Employment Opportunities | 35.5 | 50.0 | 47.2 | 43.8 |
| Agricultural Related Business or Industry | 41.9 | 24.1 | 60.4 | 42.0 |
| Agricultural Activities with Farmers | 59.7 | 13.0 | 41.5 | 39.1 |
| Development and Protection of Natural Resources | 45.2 | 29.6 | 26.4 | 34.3 |
| Land Use and Treatment | 43.5 | 24.1 | 34.0 | 34.3 |
| Health Facilities or Services | 35.5 | 38.9 | 24.5 | 33.1 |
| Youth Opportunities | 25.8 | 46.3 | 28.3 | 33.1 |
| Water and Sewer Facilities | 29.0 | 27.8 | 30.2 | 29.0 |
| Housing | 24.2 | 31.5 | 24.5 | 26.6 |
| Recreation or Tourist Enterprises | 19.4 | 25.9 | 32.1 | 25.4 |
| Training or Retraining of Workers | 17.7 | 29.6 | 11.3 | 19.5 |
| Familiarize Citizens with Resources for Development | 19.4 | 18.5 | 15.1 | 17.8 |
| Emphasis on Local Initiative | 12.9 | 11.1 | 13.2 | 12.4 |
| Other Business or Industry | 6.5 | 16.7 | 13.2 | 11.8 |
| Food, Nutrition, and Home Management | 9.7 | 16.7 | 5.7 | 10.7 |
| Transportation Facilities | 1.6 | 9.3 | 11.3 | 7.1 |

Agricultural-related business and industry was mentioned third as an area needing priority. It received 42 percent of the total priority ratings. The spread among the three groups of administrators on this issue was larger than occurred in the first two choices. Over 60 percent of the private administrators mentioned agricultural related business and industry but only 24 percent of the state-county administrators mentioned it as a priority. There also were major differences among the administrators with respect to what priority should be given to agricultural activities with farmers. Thirteen percent of the administrators of state-county organizations mentioned this activity, but 60 percent of the USDA administrators rated it as a priority area.

Transportation facilities, food, nutrition, and home management, and other business were mentioned least frequently by all respondents. There tended to be only small variation among administrators from the different groups on these items.

Areas in which the largest differences among ratings occurred were: agricultural related business, agricultural activities with farmers, development and protection of natural resources, and land use and treatment. In all but one of these areas, USDA administrators mentioned these activities more frequently than did administrators from other groups. Youth opportunities, and training and retraining of workers

were also areas in which differences among the groups occurred. The remaining areas did not show great differences among the respondents.

In conclusion, those issues that were mentioned more frequently would seem to be activities around which it might be easier to organize cooperative development programs. Activities focused on improving schools or cutting educational costs, attracting new industry, providing health facilities, and upgrading water and sewer facilities seem to be issues on which successful joint development action might be undertaken.

Differences in Activities Assigned First Priority

To further explore the differences and similarities in priorities among these administrators, we used only the activity that an administrator ranked as the first or as a number one priority. Earlier tables combined first through fifth rankings and may have covered up some of the variation among the respondents, which the use of only the first priority activity might uncover. Table 11 shows the percentage of times an activity was ranked number one divided by the total number of times it was ranked one through five.

Agricultural activities with farmers, received the largest percentage of first priority mentions as an activity receiving first priority. Administrators from each group of organizations ranked this activity number one more often than

Table 11. Percent of Organizational Administrators Who Ranked Activities as Currently Receiving First Priority in their County

| Activities Currently Receiving a Number One Priority | Organizational Type (Percentage)[a] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 53) | Total Organizations (N = 169) |
| Schools and Education | 40.5 | 33.3 | 34.3 | 36.0 |
| Agricultural Activities with Farmers | 54.2 | 66.7 | 63.0 | 59.4 |
| Agricultural Related Business and Industry | 6.1 | 23.5 | 17.2 | 13.9 |
| Water and Sewer Facilities | 9.1 | 12.5 | 21.1 | 14.0 |
| Health Facilities or Services | 4.8 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 3.6 |
| Employment Opportunities | 0.0 | 14.3 | 36.4 | 20.8 |
| Housing | 18.2 | 13.3 | 7.1 | 13.7 |
| Land Use and Treatment | 20.0 | 10.0 | 0.0 | 12.0 |
| Recreation and Tourist Enterprises | 6.3 | 12.5 | 0.0 | 6.1 |
| Development and Protection of Natural Resources | 10.0 | 28.6 | 0.0 | 13.6 |
| Other Business or Industry | 25.0 | 11.1 | 33.3 | 21.4 |
| Youth Opportunities | 0.0 | 0.0 | 9.1 | 3.3 |
| Transportation Facilities | 0.0 | 14.3 | 0.0 | 5.9 |
| Food, Nutrition, and Home Management | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Familiarize Citizens with Resources for Development | 20.0 | 20.0 | 25.0 | 21.4 |
| Training or Retraining of Workers | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Emphasis on Local Initiative | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

[a] Percentages are based on the proportion of times an activity was ranked first divided by the total number of ranks.

a lower rank. Schools and education was mentioned less frequently as an activity that receives a first priority. The rank of schools and education in earlier tables seems to result in part from the number of two-through-five rankings received. Each group of administrators mentioned schools and education as a first priority item with about the same frequency. Employment opportunities, business and industry, and familiarize citizens with resources were mentioned as receiving highest priority by about a fifth of the total respondents.

Table 12 shows the percentage of administrators who felt that a particular activity currently should be ranked number one. For the total group of administrators, agricultural activities with farmers was mentioned most frequently. This was followed, in order of frequency, by employment opportunities, other business and industry, schools and education, land use and treatment, and development and protection of natural resources. A review of Table 12 indicates that agricultural activities with farmers, employment opportunities, and business and industry appear to be areas in which emphasis could be given in future planning.

Some of the largest differences among administrators were found in Table 12. Employment opportunities was ranked first by 44 percent of the state-county agencies, by 40 percent of the private groups, and by 18 percent of the USDA

Table 12. Percent of Organizational Administrators Who Ranked Activities as Currently Needing a First Priority in their County

| Activities Currently Needing First Priority | Organizational Type (Percentage)[a] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 53) | Total Organizations (N = 169) |
| Schools and Education | 29.0 | 38.7 | 17.9 | 28.9 |
| Employment Opportunities | 18.2 | 44.4 | 40.0 | 35.1 |
| Agricultural Related Business or Industry | 0.0 | 30.8 | 18.8 | 14.1 |
| Agricultural Activities with Farmers | 51.4 | 28.6 | 45.5 | 47.1 |
| Development and Protection of Natural Resources | 25.0 | 37.5 | 7.1 | 24.1 |
| Land Use and Treatment | 22.2 | 30.8 | 27.8 | 25.9 |
| Health Facilities or Services | 4.5 | 0.0 | 23.0 | 7.1 |
| Youth Opportunities | 0.0 | 4.0 | 6.7 | 3.6 |
| Water and Sewer Facilities | 11.1 | 0.0 | 25.0 | 12.2 |
| Housing | 33.3 | 11.8 | 7.7 | 17.8 |
| Recreation or Tourist Enterprises | 16.7 | 21.4 | 5.9 | 14.0 |
| Training or Retraining of Workers | 9.1 | 6.3 | 0.0 | 6.1 |
| Familiarize Citizens with Resources for Development | 8.3 | 30.0 | 12.5 | 16.7 |
| Emphasis on Local Initiative | 12.5 | 0.0 | 14.3 | 9.5 |
| Other Business or Industry | 25.0 | 33.3 | 28.6 | 30.0 |
| Food, Nutrition, and Home Management | 16.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.6 |
| Transportation Facilities | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

[a]Percentages are based on the proportion of times an activity was ranked first divided by the total number of ranks.

agencies. Agricultural related business and industry, health facilities, water and sewer facilities, and housing were also areas in which some of the largest differences occurred.

Administrators of private associations gave more first rankings to agricultural activities with farmers, employment opportunities, business and industry, and land use and treatment than to other areas. Depending on the particular county in which development efforts are undertaken, most of the areas previously mentioned are likely to be activities around which private groups can be mobilized.

To compare the priorities given, with the priorities which should be given, we assigned a weighted score to each activity. Five points were given to a first priority, four points to a second and so on. The difference between "given" and "should be given" was obtained by subtracting the smaller number from the larger. If priorities "given" and "should be given" are balanced, the percentage difference will be zero. A positive score indicates those activities that received more "should" than "given" choices. A negative score indicates those activities that received more "given" than "should" choices. These scores are presented in Table 13.

Activities where greater priority was being given than should be given were: familiarize citizens with development resources (-66), development and protection of natural resources (-43), transportation facilities (-42), and agricul-

Table 13. Organizational Administrators' Weighted Scores of Activities Currently Receiving and Currently Needing Priority

| Activities Assigned Priority Rankings | Weighted Scores[a] | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Currently Receiving Priority | Currently Needing Priority | Percentage Difference |
| Schools and Education | 414 | 306 | -26.1 |
| Agricultural Activities with Farmers | 409 | 254 | -37.9 |
| Agricultural Related Business and Industry | 243 | 223 | - 8.2 |
| Water and Sewer Facilities | 163 | 131 | -19.6 |
| Health Facilities and Services | 146 | 245 | +67.8 |
| Employment Opportunities | 135 | 132 | - 2.2 |
| Housing | 135 | 186 | +37.8 |
| Land Use and Treatment | 132 | 152 | +15.2 |
| Recreation and Tourist Enterprises | 129 | 113 | -12.4 |
| Development and Protection of Natural Resources | 120 | 68 | -43.3 |
| Other Business or Industry | 120 | 186 | +55.0 |
| Youth Opportunities | 76 | 133 | +75.0 |
| Transportation Facilities | 43 | 25 | -41.9 |
| Food, Nutrition and Home Management | 42 | 82 | +95.2 |
| Familiarize Citizens with Resources for Development | 35 | 12 | -65.7 |
| Training or Retraining of Workers | 31 | 72 | +132.3 |
| Emphasis on Local Initiative | 21 | 54 | +157.1 |

[a]The weighted score was calculated by assigning five points to a first priority, four points to a second priority, three points to a third priority, and two points to a fourth priority, and one point to a fifth priority.

tural activities with farmers (-38). Activities which received larger "currently needing priority" than "currently receiving priority" scores were emphasis on local initiative (+157), training and retraining of workers (+132), and food, nutrition, and home management (+95). None of these, however, were mentioned very frequently in the one to five ranking system. Among activities that were mentioned more frequently and where larger differences occurred were health, housing, and other business and industry.

Administrative Perceptions and Organizational Affiliation

Administrators tend to describe priorities in their county in terms of the types of programs offered by their own organizations. In chapter 4, we also found definitions of development and the types of development activities mentioned by administrators were often associated with the type of organization with which they were identified. This pattern raises two questions: Is this to be expected? What impact if any will it have on planning for development?

Dearborn and Simon (1958) in a study of business executives found that executives more frequently perceived or understood the activities and goals of their own department than activities that related to the larger organization as a whole. Dearborn and Simon found that:

> Presented with a complex stimulus, the subject perceives in it what he is "ready" to perceive; the

> more complex or ambiguous the stimulus, the more this perception is determined by what is already "in" in the subject and less by what is in the stimulus.

Rural development is a complex process involving several groups and approaches. For the group of administrators in our sample, there seems to be some degree of ambiguity about the development process and its end result. Consistent with the work of Dearborn and Simon (1958), when administrators are questioned about development, we would expect them to select as areas needing priority those activities with which they are most familiar because of their training, experience, and responsibility.

Since there is considerable variation in program emphasis among the general categories of organizations used previously, we classified each organization as belonging to an agricultural interest or employment interest category and compared these categories with all the organizations not in the category. The organizations placed in the agricultural category were: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension Service, Rural Electric Cooperatives, and the Farm Bureau. The units in the employment interest category were: community action agencies, employment service, welfare, county bankers' associations, and industrial development corporations. Some organizations did not fit in either of these categories and were not included in the anal-

ysis.

In Table 14, we combined the priority ratings of one through five and compared the interest and noninterest categories with respect to the percentage of administrators who ranked selected activities. We selected activities that in our judgement, reflected most closely the interests of each category of organizations. This was done to determine whether administrators in each category would mention this activity more frequently than administrators in organizations with other interests, or where the selected interest is not a central focus.

In each case, administrators of agricultural interest groups ranked agricultural related activities more frequently than did the administrators of nonagricultural interest groups. In three out of four activities, the administrators of agricultural groups rated agricultural activities nearly twice as frequently as did administrators from other units.

The pattern in the employment interest group is the same. Using business and other industry, training and retraining of workers, and employment opportunities as priorities, administrators of employment related organizations consistently rated these activities more frequently as priority areas than did administrators of organizations in which employment was likely to be of less concern.

Table 14. Administrator's Ratings of County Priorities by Organizational Interests

| Activities Which Currently Should Be Given Priority in the County | Type of Organizational Interests (Percentage) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Agricultural (N = 92) | Nonagricultural (N = 90) |
| Agricultural Activities | | |
| Agricultural activities with farmers | 54.3 | 26.7 |
| Agricultural related business and industry | 50.0 | 36.7 |
| Development and protection of natural resources | 43.5 | 23.3 |
| Land use and treatment | 48.9 | 18.7 |
| | Employment (N = 52) | Nonemploy (N = 130) |
| Employment Activities | | |
| Business and industry | 21.1 | 7.7 |
| Training and retraining of workers | 34.6 | 14.6 |
| Employment opportunities | 73.1 | 29.2 |

Those attempting to coordinate the programs of organizations in which administrators have received specialized training and where the major goals, while not in conflict are not the same, will likely encounter serious problems. If the administrators had a more general education and training, or administrators were permitted considerable latitude in program development, or they were evaluated in terms of improvements in the quality of life among all groups in the community, planning for cooperative relations would likely move ahead more rapidly.

# CHAPTER 6

# CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND COOPERATIVE PLANNING

## Introduction

Any discussion of cooperation among development organizations must of necessity deal with the characteristics of the units involved. Structural features of organizations are associated with their level of cooperation with other groups (Klonglan and Paulson, 1971). If administrators understand the characteristics of groups with which they hope to work, they might be better able to anticipate problems and explore mechanisms for initiating or expanding cooperative efforts. In this chapter we will discuss a number of characteristics associated with the willingness of organizations to become involved in interagency cooperation.

## Length of Service

One of the problems in building cooperative relations among organizations involves the question of organizational domain. At any given time, a number of different groups in a community or county are identified as part of the development system. Public and private interests, however, are continuously creating new agencies and associations related to the development effort. Typically, the established groups, those that have performed development functions over a long period of time, are slow to accept new groups into their area of

service. Some of these new groups may be accepted if their services are not viewed as threatening to established programs; others may meet with resistance.

To find the length of time different groups have existed, we asked administrators, "Could you tell us what year your organization began to function in this county?" Organizations varied in the length of time they have been operating in their respective counties. The dates of their inception in the county, as shown in Table 15, ranged from the early 1900's to as late as 1970. Many of the development organizations at the county level have been in operation for a considerable length of time. The largest percentage of organizations originated during the 1930's. There was also some increase in the number of development related organizations in the last 10 year period among the state-county units and among the private associations. Included among these are county planning and zoning committees and community action agencies.

Nearly all the USDA organizations began their operations before the 1950's, and only a small number were started within the last 10 years. USDA agencies, in terms of tenure and program emphasis, have been established longer than most of the other public and private groups. Many of the state-county and private associations recently have begun to relate more directly to development efforts in their counties and they

Table 15. Organizations' Length of Service in Their Counties

| Years of Service | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 50) | Total (N = 166) |
| 1900-1930 | 22.6 | 3.7 | 36.0 | 20.5 |
| 1931-1940 | 43.5 | 40.7 | 30.0 | 38.6 |
| 1941-1950 | 27.4 | 7.4 | 4.0 | 13.9 |
| 1951-1960 | 3.2 | 24.1 | 18.0 | 14.5 |
| 1961-1970 | 3.2 | 24.1 | 12.0 | 12.7 |

Table 16. Number of Administrative Levels in County Development Organizations

| Number of Administrative Levels | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 32) | Total (N = 145) |
| One | 0.0 | 15.7 | 34.4 | 13.1 |
| Two | 17.7 | 25.5 | 34.4 | 24.1 |
| Three | 56.5 | 19.6 | 6.3 | 32.4 |
| Four | 25.8 | 31.4 | 18.8 | 26.2 |
| Five | 0.0 | 7.8 | 6.3 | 4.1 |

might be expected to play an increasingly larger role in future county development activities.

Number of Administrative Levels

Development organizations vary in the extent to which they are organized hierarchically. Some are very complex and have several levels through which orders must flow, either upward as advice or downward in the form of directives. Units with a large number of levels are often less flexible in responding to changes from outside the organization, but seem to have a greater capacity for implementing change within their own units.

We asked each administrator to list the titles of all the paid positions, both part-time and full time, held by persons working in their office. Five levels were identified and used in calculating these percentages: top administrator, assistants to top administrator, professional staff, secretarial and clerical staff, and skilled and unskilled workers. Table 16 shows the percentage of organizations with different numbers of administrative levels. Only 4 percent of the units indicated that their organizations had as many as five levels. Although no USDA agencies reported having five levels, 82 percent reported three or four levels as compared with 58 percent of the state-county units and 31 percent of the private associations. Sixty-nine percent of the private organizations had only one or two levels. But an additional

25 percent had four or five levels. Included among these were industrial development corporations and rural electric cooperatives. Overall, the public agencies tended to have more administrative levels than did the private associations.

Number of Positions

Another frequently used indicator of organizational structure is the number of different job specialties in an organization. A larger number of specialties usually indicates a greater diversity among the staff in their training and experience and in their contacts with outside groups. Positions refer to the occupational categories (such as secretary, clerk-typist, social worker, extension agent, accountant, and engineer) that were reported by each administrator.

We counted the number of different positions reported by each administrator and grouped them into three categories for reporting our data. The data in Table 17 show that organizations were about equally divided among the three levels. There were some differences among the three groups, however. Private associations tended to be less specialized and had a smaller number of positions than did the other two groups. State-county agencies had the largest percentage of their units in the high category. The probability of contacts between development groups and state-county agencies would be fairly high because of the diversification of these units and the range of activities in which they are engaged. At the

Table 17. Number of Positions in County Development Organizations.

| Number of Positions | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 50) | Private Associations (N = 32) | Total (N = 144) |
| Low | 12.9 | 36.0 | 68.8 | 33.3 |
| Medium | 56.5 | 18.0 | 6.2 | 31.9 |
| High | 30.2 | 46.0 | 25.1 | 34.7 |

same time, the probability of contacts between public organized development groups and private associations could be expected to be fairly low because of smaller staffs and more specialized interests among private associations.

Total Number of Personnel

Size of organization is an important characteristic for understanding involvement in interagency programs because of the relationship of organizational size to the amount of resources, diversity of personnel, and range of programs offered. Larger organizations often have more resources, a wider range of personnel and programs and might be less interested in entering into cooperative relations with other groups since they are more self-supporting (Klonglan et.al., 1972). We asked administrators for the number of paid staff who were employed either full-time or part-time during 1971. Table 18 reports the number of paid staff in county organizations. The number of personnel ranged from one to over a hundred. Some of the agencies employed large numbers of personnel on a full-time or part-time basis. These included the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, community action groups, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

One-fifth of the organizations had a staff of 10 or more employees. Fourteen percent of the USDA agencies reported more than 10 paid staff members, 27 percent of the state-county category listed more than 10 staff, and 26 percent of

the private organizations reported a staff of 10 or more paid employees. Private groups tended to have a smaller number of paid staff, but there were also a few private groups with a staff of over 10 employees. Having a smaller staff and limited resources should mean that private groups more than public groups will be interested in cooperative development activities.

Just over a half of the organizations have volunteers in staff positions. As might be expected, the private associations had the greatest number of units using volunteer staff. Seven of the USDA units also reported the use of volunteer staff, with some agencies reporting the use of upward to 100 volunteers. This occurred mainly within the Extension Service through their use of 4-H club leaders.

Annual Expenditures

Rural development activities, whether they are conducted by single organizations or through cooperative efforts among several groups, require financial resources. Planners might ask, "Where is the money going to come from?" "Which organizations have financial resources, and how willing are they to commit these resources to rural development?" "How much money is available and are there any restrictions on its use?" Each of these questions becomes more important when planners recognize that local resources are insufficient to carry out large scale development projects.

We asked administrators, "Approximately how much were your organization's total expenditures for your last calendar or fiscal year? The expenditures reported included the costs of operating the office and monies paid out to clients either through loans or direct assistance. Four-fifths of the organizations had budgets of $100,000 or greater (see Table 19). Ninety percent of the USDA and state-county agencies had budgets exceeding $100,000 per year. A smaller number of private associations had budgets of this size. Half of the state-county organizations reported expenditures exceeding $500,000 per year. Much of this money was made available through programs designed to provide for the aged, the handicapped, the unemployed, and those with low incomes.

Adding the dollar figures together for all the organizations in any given county shows the large amount of financial help available through existing development related groups. USDA agencies,which draw on resources outside the state, and state-county groups, which draw on resources outside the county, can bring an extremely large amount of financial resources to bear on local problems whether these occur at the individual, community, or county level.

Types of Services

What types of services exist in a county and where can they be found are central questions in planning for development. When cooperation among groups depends on being familiar

Table 18. Number of Paid Personnel in County Development Organizations

| Number of Paid Personnel | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 49) | Private Associations (N = 31) | Total (N = 142) |
| 1-3 | 27.4 | 28.6 | 67.7 | 36.6 |
| 4-5 | 38.7 | 12.2 | 6.5 | 22.5 |
| 6-9 | 19.4 | 32.7 | 0 | 19.7 |
| 10-19 | 3.2 | 12.3 | 12.9 | 8.5 |
| 20 or more | 11.3 | 14.3 | 12.9 | 12.7 |

Table 19. Annual Expenditures of County Development Organizations

| Annual Expenditures | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 60) | State-County (N = 46) | Private Associations (N = 41) | Total (N = 147) |
| $ 1000- 10,000 | 5.0 | 0 | 14.6 | 6.1 |
| $ 11,000- 99,000 | 5.0 | 10.9 | 14.6 | 9.5 |
| $100,000-499,000 | 56.7 | 39.1 | 45.3 | 48.3 |
| $500,000-998,000 | 33.3 | 50.0 | 25.5 | 36.1 |

with each other's objectives and programs, it becomes important to identify the objectives and services provided by each group. Attempts to plan development activities may be improved if community resources (e.g., services provided by public and private groups) are known by those involved in the planning process. If certain types of services are needed to broaden the development effort, where can the planner go to obtain these services?

We asked each administrator to indicate whether or not each of the following services was provided by his organization: financial assistance, referrals to other agencies, formal educational services, mass media education services, planning assistance, technical assistance and assistance for attracting new industry.

Seventy-five percent of the administrators reported their organizations provided planning assistance (see Table 20). The USDA and state-county units had the greatest number in this service category. Referrals to other organizations were provided by over three-fifths of the organizations, and again the USDA agencies had the greatest proportion of units involved in this service area.

Sixty-eight percent of the organizations provided mass media education services to their clients or members. Technical assistance and financial assistance were provided by nearly half of the organizations studied. The largest per-

Table 20. Types of Services Provided by County Development Organizations

| Types of Services Offered | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53[a]) | Total (N = 169[a]) |
| Planning Assistance | 85.5 | 79.2 | 56.9 | 74.7 |
| Provide Referrals | 88.7 | 69.8 | 56.6 | 72.6 |
| Mass Media Education | 80.6 | 59.3 | 62.3 | 68.0 |
| Technical Assistance | 71.0 | 44.2 | 23.1 | 47.6 |
| Financial Assistance | 51.6 | 48.1 | 39.6 | 46.7 |
| Attract New Industry | 30.6 | 44.4 | 52.8 | 42.0 |
| Formal Education | 27.4 | 35.2 | 15.1 | 26.0 |

[a]The number of organizations varies downward slightly because of missing data and because of those not offering the services.

centage of organizations that provided technical and financial assistance occurred among the USDA agencies.

Three organizations out of the total number studied provided all seven services. Community action agencies, employment service agencies, and welfare agencies reported offering the widest range of the services studied. Private associations reported the largest percentage of units involved in the area of attracting new industry. Some of the other services provided by the private groups were mass media education, referrals, and planning assistance.

Although a large number of organizations provide planning assistance, each unit usually does so for a different client system. USDA agencies have worked primarily with individual farmers. Some state-county agencies have worked primarily with low income families, other agencies have worked with the unemployed, and other agencies have worked with people living in small communities without basic services. Other county agencies work with local businessmen and community leaders who are interested in the expansion of local communities. The same pattern of delivery to special groups also occurs with the other services. Each of the organizations studied tends to provide for part of the needs of a particular client system rather than attempting to meet the total needs of a community.

Source of New Programs

Groups that initiate their own new programs usually have greater local discretion and tend to exercise greater control over their own operation. These groups are able to move into joint interagency programs with more ease than organizations in which decisions about projects are made at higher administrative levels. Just the opposite may be the case, however, when higher administrative levels direct the local unit to cooperate with other local groups. Understanding where the decision making prerogatives lie may suggest the difficulty or ease with which groups might be attracted to development projects.

We asked each administrator, "Will you indicate the frequency with which new programs become initiated by each of the following sources: national level, state level, district or area level, and county level?"

The frequency of times each level initiated new programs for the local unit is shown in Table 21. Just over three-fifths of the administrators reported that new programs were initiated at the national level. Over one-third (39 percent) of these administrators indicated that this happened frequently. As was expected, the USDA organizations, which are tied more closely to a federal system, had the largest proportion reporting that new programs were initiated by this level. Forty-one percent of the state-county units also re-

Table 21. Source of New Program Initiation in County Development Organizations

| Frequency of Initiation Level | Organizational Type (Percentage) USDA Agencies (N = 62[a]) | State-County (N = 54[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53[a]) | Total (N = 169[a]) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NATIONAL (N = 150) | | | | |
| Never | 0.0 | 23.9 | 47.6 | 22.7 |
| Seldom | 9.7 | 6.5 | 11.9 | 9.3 |
| Sometimes | 38.7 | 28.3 | 21.4 | 30.7 |
| Frequently | 51.6 | 41.3 | 19.0 | 39.3 |
| STATE (N = 154) | | | | |
| Never | 25.4 | 22.4 | 28.3 | 25.3 |
| Seldom | 8.5 | 10.2 | 10.9 | 9.7 |
| Sometimes | 47.5 | 46.9 | 34.8 | 43.6 |
| Frequently | 18.6 | 20.4 | 26.1 | 21.4 |
| DISTRICT OR AREA (N = 136) | | | | |
| Never | 40.7 | 50.0 | 36.6 | 41.9 |
| Seldom | 10.2 | 16.7 | 26.8 | 16.9 |
| Sometimes | 25.4 | 25.0 | 22.0 | 24.3 |
| Frequently | 23.7 | 8.3 | 14.6 | 16.9 |
| COUNTY (N = 156) | | | | |
| Never | 33.9 | 18.4 | 22.9 | 25.6 |
| Seldom | 13.6 | 14.3 | 10.4 | 12.8 |
| Sometimes | 30.5 | 34.7 | 22.9 | 29.5 |
| Frequently | 22.0 | 32.7 | 43.8 | 32.1 |

[a]Number of organizations varies downward slightly because of missing data.

ported frequent program direction from the federal level. The private associations had the smallest proportion reporting nationally initiated programs.

Three-fourths of the administrators reported new programs were initiated by the state level. One fifth reported that the state level "frequently" initiated new programs. There were no major differences among the USDA, state-county, and private organizations with respect to the frequency of state level initiated programs.

District or area level of initiation of new programs was reported by 79 administrators. Seventeen percent of them indicated that district or area levels frequently initiated new programs, and 42 percent indicated that this level never initiated new programs. The USDA agencies had the greatest proportion (24 percent) reporting that new programs were initiated frequently by district or area personnel.

Three-fourths of the administrators indicated that the county level was the source of new programs. Three-fifths of these organizations specified that new programs were frequently or sometimes initiated by their own unit, but 26 percent indicated that their own local unit never initiated new programs. The private organizations had the largest proportion (44 percent) who reported frequent initiation by county units. USDA agencies had the greatest proportion (34 percent) of units who indicated that the county group never initiated

new programs.

Accountability of Unit

Another indicator of the local organization's degree of control is the distance between the local unit and the final source of authority. In some organizations, the local unit is governed by a local board of directors; in others, there are administrators at area or district levels and (or) at the state level. Some units may answer to more than one decision making body because of multiple funding arrangements. The ability to participate in cooperative development efforts and the level of commitment to such efforts may depend on permission being granted by several levels, one or more of which may be located outside the area covered by the planning effort.

Each administrator was asked, "To what person or groups of persons are you directly responsible, i.e., to whom do you report directly to as a higher authority?"

The data in Table 22 show that nearly two-fifths of the administrators reported to a board of directors or council at the county level. This pattern was more common among the private groups since most were either local or were part of a federated state or national system. The USDA groups had the largest percentage of administrators answering to area administrators and who also reported to a local council. Each of the USDA agencies has a local lay committee that sets policy

Table 22. Accountability of Local County Development Organizations

| Level of Accountability | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62) | State-County (N = 54) | Private Associations (N = 52) | Total (N = 166) |
| Board of Directors, County Council | 17.7 | 40.7 | 55.8 | 36.9 |
| Area or District Administrator | 41.9 | 11.1 | 1.9 | 14.6 |
| State Administrator | 4.8 | 16.7 | 3.8 | 8.3 |
| Local Council plus a Higher Administrator | 24.2 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 10.7 |

and decides on the acceptability of program applicants, in addition to administrators at the area and state levels. The state-county units, on the other hand, answered mainly to a local board or council and less to state level administrators. The private associations had the smallest number of administrative levels. As a result, decisions, especially those relating to cooperative efforts between two groups, will most likely be made at the local level rather than being referred to a higher administrative level. Although not all joint efforts in which a public agency might participate will require permission by higher levels, most projects involving funds, staff time, or physical facilities are likely to require approval by higher levels.

# CHAPTER 7

## DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD COOPERATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

### Introduction

Although research on the relationship between attitudes and behavior has shown weak to moderate associations between the two, the evidence is strong enough to support the position that attitudes influence behavior. The specific manner in which attitudes influence behavior is still somewhat unclear, but individuals attitudes are important factors in some aspects of behavior. Administrators who hold negative attitudes about development or especially about cooperative development efforts can be expected to be less enthusiastic about the activities than those who hold more positive attitudes.

In this chapter we intend to show the similarities and differences in perceptions and attitudes among administrators of public and private organizations. Perceptions of the present level of cooperative efforts, and of the relative emphasis placed on individual versus collective development action will be examined.

Perceived Cooperative System in Counties

Each administrator was asked a series of questions about the extent to which cooperative development activities have occurred in his county. Each of the questions asked is shown in Table 23.

Two-fifths of the administrators reported that several new development groups had been formed in their county within the last two years. The number who reported this situation was higher among the USDA agencies than among the other groups. Most of the administrators felt that county development programs were characterized by joint decision making. This feeling was shared with nearly equal strength by administrators of each of the three organizational types. Just over three-fifths of the administrators felt that organizations in their counties often participate in joint development action. Administrators of each of the groups shared the same perceptions. One-fourth of the respondents felt that one group made most of the decisions affecting development in their counties. The administrators of private groups tended to feel this way more so than did administrators of the public groups. This might reflect the marginal role that they seem to have played in development.

In view of the previous four statements, we might have expected administrators to report an expansion in their contacts with development groups, but this was not the case.

Table 23. The Perceived Cooperative System in the Sample Counties by Organizational Type

| Item Agreement[b] | Organizational Type (Percentage) USDA Agencies (N = 62[a]) | State-County (N = 54[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53[a]) | Total Organizations (N = 169[a]) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Several new development organizations or groups have been formed in this county in the last two years. | 53 | 31 | 31 | 39 |
| Joint decision making takes place in most county development programs. | 94 | 77 | 92 | 88 |
| Organizations in this county often participate in joint development action. | 69 | 71 | 65 | 69 |
| One dominant group makes most of the decisions affecting county development. | 25 | 23 | 35 | 28 |
| Our organization's contacts with other groups in this county have remained about the same over the last few years. | 50 | 62 | 71 | 60 |
| Our organization is usually invited to participate in cooperative development efforts. | 79 | 68 | 58 | 69 |
| Our organization often joins with other groups in carrying out its activities. | 77 | 65 | 41 | 62 |
| Our organization works independently of other groups. | 23 | 49 | 51 | 40 |

[a]Number of organizations varies downward slightly because of missing data.

[b]The two response categories of "definitely true" and "mostly true" are combined to form Item Agreement. The percentage of those who were uncertain or felt the statement was false or definitely false was not presented, but can be determined by subtraction.

Three-fifths of the administrators reported that their own organization's contacts had remained the same over the last few years. This was more true of the private groups and the state-county groups than of the USDA agencies.

Administrators of different types of organizations varied in their perceptions of whether they were usually invited to participate in cooperative development efforts. Sixty-nine percent of the total administrators indicated that they were usually invited to participate, but three-fifths of the private administrators, compared with four-fifths of the USDA administrators, felt that this statement characterized their relationship to development efforts in their counties. A slightly smaller percent of state-county administrators (62 percent) reported that their organizations often join with other groups in carrying out their activities. USDA administrators reported the highest involvement with other groups (77 percent), and the private administrators reported the lowest involvement with other groups (41 percent). The state-county administrators were in an intermediate position. Consistent with this item is the question that relates to whether the organization worked independently of other groups. Here again, half of the administrators of private associations reported this was the case as compared with less than a fourth of the USDA administrators.

Perceived Need for Cooperative Action in Development

The data in Table 24 indicates that a large number of administrators gave strong verbal support to the need for collective or cooperative efforts in development programs. About 90 percent of the total group of administrators responded that each statement shown in the table was true. These statements contained the following ideas: collective effort is necessary to make a measureable change in quality of life, collective activity will yield the best results, development will be successful only when organizations learn to cooperate in pursuit of goals larger than their own, residents have a right to expect cooperation among development groups, and each organization has a responsibility to contribute to the larger development effort. Although the variation among the groups was small, what little variation did occur showed that the private administrators tended to feel less strongly about the need for cooperative action than did administrators of the public agencies.

Attitudes Toward Collective Versus Agency Orientations

Table 25 shows that a third of the administrators felt that it was more important to maintain and build their own programs than to participate in larger development efforts since this is what they were being paid for. Administrators in each of the groups responded in about the same way to this

Table 24. Perceived Need for Cooperative Development Action by Organizational Type

| Item Agreement [b] | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62[a]) | State-County (N = 54[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53[a]) | Total (N = 169[a]) |
| Only through a collective effort by several organizations (including our own) at development, will it be possible to make a measureable change in the quality of life in our county. | 90 | 94 | 86 | 90 |
| Collective activity by public and private groups will yield better results in our county development efforts than will the efforts of several groups which act independently of one another. | 97 | 94 | 92 | 95 |
| Development efforts in our county will not be successful until each of the relevant organizations learns to cooperate in pursuit of goals larger than their own specific objectives. | 87 | 80 | 90 | 86 |
| Organizations which participate in development activities should cooperate in a unified effort. | 100 | 100 | 96 | 97 |
| Residents in our county have a right to expect that the major groups in the county will cooperate together in development activities. | 100 | 98 | 92 | 97 |
| Although participation in joint development projects may never aid our organization in achieving its special objectives, we still have a responsibility to contribute to this larger effort. | 98 | 100 | 94 | 98 |

[a] Number of organizations varies downward slightly because of missing data.
[b] The two response categories of definitely true and mostly true are combined to form Item Agreement.

Table 25. Administrators' Attitudes Toward a Collective or an Agency Orientation by Organizational Type

| Item Agreement[b] | Organizational Type (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | USDA Agencies (N = 62[a]) | State-County (N = 54[a]) | Private Associations (N = 53[a]) | Total (N = 169[a]) |
| Maintaining and building our programs, not participating in larger development activities, is what we are paid for. | 32 | 34 | 33 | 33 |
| In order to be effective, it is more important for our organization to consider its own objectives than trying to participate in a broader program where our personnel do not have special preparation. | 44 | 72 | 46 | 53 |
| Coordination with other groups will reduce our effectiveness. | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| When participating in a large cooperative effort our main concern is the amount of benefit which flows to our own organization. | 8 | 16 | 16 | 13 |

[a]Number of organizations varies downward slightly because of missing data.

[b]The two response categories of definitely true and mostly true are combined to form Item Agreement.

statement. When the question about their own unit's effectiveness was asked, just over half of the administrators indicated that it is more important to consider the objectives of their own unit than to participate in programs where their personnel did not have special training. There were wide differences among the state-county, USDA, and private administrators on this item. Seventy-two percent of the state-county administrators indicated that this statement was true, a lower number of USDA agencies (44 percent) and private groups (46 percent) indicated that this statement was true.

A very small number (4 percent) of administrators felt that coordination with other groups had reduced their effectiveness. A slightly larger number (13 percent) felt that their primary concern when working in a cooperative effort with other groups should be with the amount of benefit that flows to their own organizations.

In summary, administrators in our sample held a very positive attitude about the need for action among development groups. A majority of the administrators felt that several groups were involved in making decisions about development in their counties and that groups often worked together on joint projects. A majority of the respondents indicated that their organization was invited to work with other units, and that they in fact had worked with other groups in their counties. Almost all administrators expressed strong positive feelings

about the need for cooperation in development programs. Some of the administrators felt, however, that they were not being paid to participate in larger development projects, and a slightly larger number of respondents felt that their own unit's effectiveness would be increased by focusing on its own objectives rather than getting involved in programs where their personnel had no special training.

# CHAPTER 8

# COUNTY RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

## Introduction

This chapter focuses on the county Rural Development Committee system: its goals, benefits, methods of operation, member evaluations of success, and areas where improvement is needed. We found that of the 169 administrators interviewed, nearly half knew about the committee. Eighty-four percent of those who were aware of the committee were members of one of the committees. Although the visibility of the Committee tended to vary from one county to the next, the percentage of those who were not involved in the Committee and still knew about its existence was very small (16 percent). This chapter presents information collected from the 67 administrators who were members of one of the County Rural Development Committees. The number of members in county committees ranged from 3 to 7.

## Committee Goals

Cooperation within an interorganizational committee is often limited when each organizational unit defines the larger committee's goals in terms of its own programs. Among other things, this leads to misunderstandings among the member units about what the committee is supposed to do. Furthermore, if joint projects are developed, they may be an ex-

pansion of the ongoing programs of one or more of the member agencies. Finally, if the committee's goals are defined only in terms of USDA agency programs, the likelihood of involving other public groups or private associations may be reduced when the other groups' goals differ from USDA goals.

Each member of a RD Committee was asked, "What are the goals or objectives of the RD Committee in your county?" Many of the administrators described their committees' goals in abstract terms such as: to further the welfare of rural people, to improve rural life in town and on the farm, to improve the environment in which we live, to promote development of rural areas, and to improve rural conditions. Although each of these statements reflected a general awareness of committee goals, they revealed little more than what is suggested by the name of the committee.

A number of administrators described the goals of the committee in specific terms. Some of the more specific goals listed were: To give technical aid and educational assistance to development groups; to serve as a communications vehicle between organizations and to stimulate interest in rural development among these organizations; to help coordinate the efforts of organizations in the county; to explore problems in the county and to make appropriate persons aware of these problems so they will take action; and to inventory resources, determine needs, help in planning, carry out pro-

jects to meet our needs, and mobilize resource groups.

There were also some concrete goals mentioned that tended to reflect the unique goals of the agencies from which members were drawn. For example, some goals were described in terms of improving the condition of county housing, or developing the land through approved soil and water conservation techniques, or to provide information on agricultural improvements to farmers.

Committee Benefits

One of the major problems in planning for cooperative programs is how to make concerted decision making attractive to administrators. Previous research suggests that benefits associated with committee activity are an important factor in attracting participation by member organizations.

To identify which benefits are associated with RD committee activity, we provided each administrator with a list of benefits identified in earlier research and asked, "Has your organization received any of the following benefits as a result of your participation in the county RD Committee?"

The benefit mentioned most frequently (see Table 26) was that the committee provided a means for taking a united stand on an issue. The next three most frequently mentioned items referred to benefits of information exchange. "Improves exchange of information", "increases awareness of other organizations", and "provides a sounding board for ideas" were each

Table 26. Percentage of Rural Development Committee Members Reporting Selected Benefits from Participation and Rating Their Importance

| Committee Benefits | Percent Reporting Benefit (N = 67) | Percent Reporting "Very Important" |
|---|---|---|
| Enables members to take a united stand. | 97.0 | 46.8 |
| Improves exchange of information between organizations. | 95.5 | 65.0 |
| Increases awareness of objectives of other organizations. | 94.0 | 52.5 |
| A sounding board for ideas. | 94.0 | 40.0 |
| Helps involve influential members of the community. | 84.8 | 43.6 |
| Reduces the possibility of one organization being played off against another. | 80.6 | 21.6 |
| Provides better services for (clients/members). | 80.3 | 33.3 |
| Increases organization's effectiveness. | 75.8 | 34.7 |
| Reduces competition among member organizations. | 43.8 | 34.7 |
| Reduces threats from interest groups in the county. | 17.2 | 20.0 |
| Reduces pressures from superiors. | 12.1 | 0.0 |

mentioned by nearly every respondent.

Each of these benefits, however, varied in their importance to the administrators. Although most administrators reported a benefit of "being able to take a united stand," less than half (47 percent) rated this as "very important" in determining their organization's level of participation in the committee. Exchange of information among members of the committee was rated "very important" by three-fifths of the respondents. "Increasing awareness of the objectives of other organizations" was reported as an important benefit by half of the administrators. These last two benefits, "improves exchanges of information between organizations" and "increases awareness of objectives of other organizations," were the most highly rated benefits.

The fifth most frequently mentioned benefit dealt with the committee's potential for involving influential members of the community. A group or council of organizations may be able to recruit influential members of the community when a single group is turned down. Most development projects need inputs from the private sector, especially from groups or individuals who, because of their financial or political influence, are recognized as leaders in the community. Forty-four percent of the respondents rated involvement of influential leaders as a "very important" reason for their involvement in their committees.

Two benefits each of which were mentioned with about the same frequency, dealt with the provision of better services and increased effectiveness. Although there were 20 and 25 percent of the committee members, respectively, who did not report better services or effectiveness as benefits, an even larger number reported that these reasons were not very important in determining their level of activity.

Very few of the respondents reported an increase in amount of administrative control at the local level. Less than a fifth (17 percent) felt the committee reduced interference by interest groups in the county, and 12 percent reported that committee activity had reduced pressures from their superiors.

Overall, the respondents identified several benefits of committee participation. Most of the benefits mentioned are visible and important to participants. Increasing the visibility of committee benefits might encourage more participation among members and might be a useful means for attracting additional groups to the existing committee system.

Committee Operations

Very little systematic information about the dynamics of interagency committees is available. To understand how groups work together, we asked committee members, "How often do each of the following procedures occur in your committee?"

Specifically, we were interested in four strategies for conducting interagency activities.

The first strategy shown in Table 27 deals with the problem of which items are presented to the committee for discussion. Committee members were asked, "How often are all decisions made by unanimous consent?" Eighty-four percent of the members reported that this approach was used "most" or "all of the time." This could indicate that only noncontroversial items, which had been discussed before the meeting and on which consensus was possible, were discussed. Although it could indicate that committees do not discuss controversial issues, this strategy might also indicate high consensus among the administrators on the committee. Since we did not explore the issue in more detail with our respondents, we are not able to report which of these or other explanations is most appropriate.

The second statement could be described as "senatorial courtesy" where the majority is unwilling to impose its will in the minority. The response pattern in the answers suggested that an issue was introduced and discussed even though some of the members were opposed to the issue. Over half of the respondents (52 percent) reported that opposition by one or two members of the committee would not halt the discussion of an issue. This seems to suggest that the threat of internal conflict was not an overriding concern in these commit-

Table 27. Methods of Operation Among Selected County Rural Development Committees

| Methods of Operation | Frequency of Occurance (Percentage) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All of the time | Most of the time | Some of the time | None of the time |
| All decisions are made by unanimous consent. | 30.2 | 54.0 | 12.7 | 3.2 |
| Committee will not pursue questions if one or more of the members are opposed. | 1.6 | 12.7 | 33.3 | 52.4 |
| Members do not get involved in an issue area unless their organization's interests are affected. | 3.2 | 17.5 | 39.7 | 39.7 |
| The organization with the largest stake in the outcome of a decision is given leadership in studying the issue. | 11.5 | 55.7 | 18.0 | 14.8 |

tees.

There was indication that the committees had worked out a system for dividing tasks among the members. One-fifth of the respondents reported that most or all of the time members would not get involved in an issue unless their own organization's interests were affected. Adding those who said this happened "some of the time" produces 61 percent of the members who indicated this pattern was followed at one time or another. Organizations whose specific interests overlap the general interest of the committee appear to take the initiative and develop a particular program, while the other groups remain passive on the issue. In most cases, there may be no advantage for an administrator to get involved in an issue that does not affect his own unit's operation. In fact, by doing so, administrators may run the risk of displeasing others needlessly.

The last question asked of the administrators showed a rather common committee practice of assigning the most interested parties the responsibility for studying an issue and presenting it to the committee. Over 65 percent of the respondents indicated that, this approach occurred "most" or "all" of the time. Among other things, this approach means the interests of each group will be protected and it guarantees that when recommendations are made, they will be consistent with the interested group.

Although the data in this table were aggregated for all 16 county committees, a general pattern of dealing with issues within the Rural Development Committees seemed to emerge. It must be recognized, however, that variations from one county to the next may occur and all counties may not fit this pattern. There tended to be relatively high consensus or agreement on issues within the committees, and committees were fairly open in terms of their willingness to discuss issues on which all members might not agree.

These groups have developed a strategy for protecting the interests of the agencies that make up the committee. This was achieved by giving responsibility for developing committee programs to agencies most knowledgeable about an area of concern.

Member Evaluation of Committees

Respondents were asked to evaluate their committees as a whole. Four separate questions were used to obtain member evaluations. Administrators were asked, "To what extent do the members of the Rural Development Committee make an effort to avoid creating problems or interferring with your duties and responsibilities?" Table 28 shows that nearly four-fifths of the members reported that other committee members went to great lengths to avoid creating problems or interferring with their agencies. About 13 percent of the administrators reported that other members exercised small or very small ef-

Table 28. Perceptions of the Extent to Which Committee Members Avoid Creating Problems of Interfering with the Operations of Other Agencies

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Great Extent | 22 | 34.9 |
| Great Extent | 28 | 44.4 |
| Fair Extent | 5 | 7.9 |
| Small Extent | 4 | 6.3 |
| Very Small Extent | 4 | 6.3 |

Table 29. Perceptions of the Extent to Which the Committee has been able to Achieve a Singleness of Direction

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Great Extent | 16 | 23.9 |
| Considerable Extent | 22 | 32.8 |
| Fair Extent | 17 | 25.4 |
| Small Extent | 6 | 9.0 |
| Very Small Extent | 6 | 9.0 |

forts to avoid creating problems with other units.

A second question asked was, "In general, how smoothly do the members of the RD Committee work together?" Sixty-four percent reported that committee members worked together "very smoothly". None of the respondents indicated that the committee members failed to work together smoothly. The only variation among responses occurred in terms of "how smoothly" the committee worked.

Although the members seemed to get along well with one another, two-fifths of the members felt that the committees were not able to achieve a common focus in their efforts. We asked administrators, "In your opinion, to what extent has this Rural Development Committee been able to achieve a singleness of direction in the efforts of its groups, interests, and individuals?"

The data in Table 29 show that just over half of the respondents reported that their committees have been able to agree on a single direction or goal. A fourth of the respondents rated their committees as only fair in this regard. This could be expected since there was little similarity among members' descriptions of committee's goals. It appeared that members were not clear as to what the committee was supposed to do, and in some instances they were unable to identify the major focus of their committees' activity.

Members were asked, "On the basis of your experience and information, how would you characterize the effectiveness (success) of the Rural Development in this County?" Table 30 shows that 3 percent of the members characterized their committee as being "outstanding" or "excellent." Over half rated their committees as "good" to "excellent". But two-fifths of the members did not give their committees very high effectiveness scores.

In summary, many members seemed unsure what their committees should be doing. This uncertainty may have made it difficult to identify a common purpose. This, in turn, may have influenced perceptions of effectiveness. While our data do not demonstrate a causal relationship existing between those factors, they do suggest that such a possibility might exist.

Changes Recommended by Members

Each administrator was asked, "Which changes (in the committee) would be of greatest help to your organization?" The most frequently mentioned suggestion was the need to expand the committee to include other organizations in the county. The second most frequently mentioned suggestion dealt with the need to clarify the goals and objectives of the committee. A smaller number of administrators were uncertain about what their own agency expected of them in relation to the committee, and suggested that, if guidelines were provid-

Table 30. Perceptions of Committee Success

| Degree of Success | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Outstanding | 3 | 4.5 |
| Excellent | 6 | 8.9 |
| Very Good | 13 | 19.4 |
| Good | 18 | 26.9 |
| Fair | 13 | 19.4 |
| Rather Poor | 4 | 6.0 |
| Poor | 10 | 14.9 |

ed for the committee, it would make their work as a representative of a specialized agency much easier.

Another point mentioned by respondents dealt with the perception that some administrative superiors felt committee activities occur outside the normal range of expectations for the local administrator. The suggested change involved providing time and rewards for administrators who participate in committee activities during regular hours and defining participation in the Rural Development Committee as a regular activity.

Finally, members were asked, "Which changes would be of most benefit to the operation of the committee?" The most frequently mentioned change was that the State Rural Development Committee should set up guidelines for the county committees. There seemed to be a great deal of ambiguity within membership of the committees as to what they are supposed to do. This ambiguity was reflected in the goals described by members and in their requests for additional clarification.

# CHAPTER 9

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## Introduction

In this chapter, we will attempt to summarize our findings. Since our major focus was on cooperative relations between organizations, we have not emphasized the several unique contributions to rural development made by each of the organizations studied. Instead, we have chosen to emphasize areas in which cooperative planning efforts between development groups seem possible. Also, we have some of the problems that planners might expect to find as they attempt to develop cooperative programs aimed at rural development.

This approach was chosen after reviewing material dealing with rural development efforts in America. Because of the range and the interrelatedness of the many inequities between rural and urban America, we took the position in this report that rural development is beyond the scope of any single organization and furthermore, that it is beyond the scope of either the public or private sectors acting in isolation of one another.

Three primary elements of the development process provided the framework for our analysis: (1) integration of units involved, (2) decentralized planning and local initiative, and (3) balanced contributions from public and private

sectors. Rural development as an integrated approach was viewed as occurring when several organizations are involved in the process and each organization contributes to a larger collective effort rather than focusing entirely on its own more specialized programs. Rural development, as a decentralized approach was viewed as one in which the initiative and planning for development occurs at the local level, e.g., community, county, or region. Rural development as a partnership between the public and private sectors occurs when both public and private sectors are simultaneously making inputs into the development program.

## Research Objectives and Methods

Our specific research objectives were: to ascertain from among a selected set of organizations which public and private organizations participate in county development programs; to identify for this set of organizations the extent of interagency cooperation; to identify the factors associated with interagency cooperation; and to explore alternatives that may be used to increase cooperative activity among development groups. To reach these objectives, we purposively sampled organizations from sixteen Iowa counties. These sixteen counties were chosen to represent different types of social and economic problems encountered throughout the state.

There were 169 organizations chosen from the sixteen counties. The organizations studied were categorized into three groups---USDA agencies, state and county public agencies, and private associations. Information was gathered through the use of questionnaires and personal interviews with the top administrators from these 169 units.

## Rural Development: Definitions

The definitions of rural development solicited from the administrators of our sampled organizations included a wide range of ideas. Many of the definitions were abstract statements about the need for general improvements, and some related to more specific areas of needed improvements. The economic development category headed the list of general definitions of development. Of the three groups of organizations, the administrators of the USDA agencies indicated that economic development represented their conception of rural development more often than did the state-county organizations and the private associations. Recreation and tourism received the greatest number of mentions as specific improvements defined as development.

## Rural Development: Types of Activities

The most frequently mentioned development activities, in which the groups were involved, referred to some aspect of agriculture and to the conservation of natural resources.

Overall, the activities in which the USDA agencies, state-county organizations, and private associations participated differed significantly. USDA administrators stated that their agencies were mostly involved with the general category of agricultural activities and more specifically with conservation and land use activities. The state-county organizations were engaged to a greater extent in recreation and tourism, employment opportunities, and health and welfare. The administrators of the private associations reported that a greater percentage of their development activities were in the general areas of industrial development and agricultural development.

The types of interagency development programs in which the organizations were involved varied widely. These programs mirrored to a great extent the specific programs and goals of each organization. USDA administrators indicated that the type of interagency development program that received the greatest attention was the county rural development committee. The state-county organizations were involved in the county rural development committees, recreation and tourism, planning and zoning, and health and welfare programs. Types of interagency activities, as did the definitions of rural development and development activities, showed that all development-related organizations did not engage in similar programs. The USDA agencies had the largest amount of in-

volvement in interagency development programs. They had four times as many project contacts as did the private associations and twice as many project contacts as did the state-county public organizations. The state-county organizations reported higher level of interagency development contacts than did the private associations.

Organizational Commitment to Rural Development

Measures of commitment to intra-agency and interagency development programs showed a large number of the organizations sampled were involved in development. Levels of both intra-agency and interagency commitment were about the same for the total sample of organizations. The USDA agencies had the highest levels of current participation and were followed by the state-county public organizations and private associations. In both instances of intra-agency and interagency commitment to rural development, adding the potential for involvement to actual levels of involvement brought the state-county organizations and the private associations in closer alignment with the level of involvement of the USDA agencies. It is evident, that although the private sector and state-county agencies were not involved to as great an extent as were the USDA agencies, they still felt they should be involved.

Commitment and involvement to interagency development efforts may be affected by the types of assurance that can be

given to prospective organizations interested in joint development programs. Previous research suggests that cooperation among organizations cannot be considered a "natural' inclination. Organizations tend to resist attempts to coordinate their programs with other units because of the loss of control sometimes associated with such coordination.

Some of the more frequently required assurances relate to the goals and costs of the effort and to the delegation of responsibility. The USDA agencies and the state-county organizations placed greatest emphasis on assurances that goals of the interagency program would be similar to those of their own. The private administrators felt they needed information about the costs of the program.

Knowledge of which organizations to include in cooperative development planning and action is necessary for effective development programs. The data suggested that each administrator had strong feelings about his own organization's participation in development, as well as feelings about which other organizations should be involved in development. The Cooperative Extension Service, County Board of Supervisors, Planning and Zoning, Soil Conservation Service, and Industrial Development Corporations received the greatest number of "definitely should" mentions by the total sample of administrators. The results showed that administrators indicated that USDA agencies should be part of the development process

more frequently than they indicated that other categories should be involved. There was some variation, however, in the frequency with which different USDA agencies were mentioned. The administrators of each of the three categories of organizations tended to mention their own and similar types of organizations more often than did the administrators in the other two categories.

Priorities for Development

A necessary condition for organizing rural development is the identification of the issue areas in which cooperation among groups is possible. We surveyed the administrators from several organizations in each county to identify their perceptions of development priorities. The survey revealed some issue areas where there was consensus among administrators about activities currently receiving priority and activities currently needing priority. Further examination of the results showed where current priorities were in line with perceived needs and where difficulties in mobilizing concerted action for development could be expected to occur.

The priority areas that received the largest number of mentions were schools and education, agriculture activities with farmers, and agricultural-related business and industry. USDA agencies had the largest percentage of total sample units listing agricultural activities with farmers. The state-county organizations mentioned schools and education

most frequently. And private associations chose agricultural-related business and industry most frequently.

The priority given to these and other issues changed when the administrators ranked the activities that currently need priority. In this situation the top four activities were schools and education, employment opportunities, agricultural-related business or industry, and agricultural activities with farmers. The state-county public organizations mentioned schools and education and employment opportunities most frequently. Private associations mentioned agricultural-related business or industry most frequently. Agricultural activities with farmers was most often chosen by the USDA agencies.

The type of organization that an administrator was affiliated with was found to be associated with his perception of activities currently needing priority.

Characteristics of Development Organizations

The structure and function of development organizations were assessed to help give additional insights into organizational factors that might influence the level of cooperation among development organizations. The size and scope of an organization were measured by the number of administrative levels, the number of positions, the total number of personnel, the annual expenditures, types of services, source of new programs, and accountability to a higher administrative

level.

A majority of the total sample of organizations began their operations before 1941, and less than 13 percent of the organizations began their operations after 1960. The USDA agencies seemed to have had the longest history in their respective counties, with a large percentage of these units indicating service to their clients beginning before 1941 and an even greater percentage being in operation before 1951. The state-county public organizations had approximately half of their units beginning their operations after 1950 and over 40 percent beginning their operations before 1941.

Private associations tended to have fewer administrative levels, positions, paid personnel and volunteer staff, and a smaller budget than did the USDA agencies or the state-county organizations. The USDA agencies tended to have larger staffs and budgets than did the private associations and in some cases larger than the state-county public organizations. An examination of the type of services provided by USDA organizations showed that planning assistance, referrals, and mass media education services were mentioned the largest number of times. The private associations tended to have the greatest freedom at the local level in initiating new programs and also were found to have the greatest freedom in operating their organizations. New programs in the USDA agencies and the state-county organizations were initiated more frequently

by the national level than by the local county level.

The accountability of a local county organization to other higher level units in its structure was much greater for the USDA agencies than for the state-county public organizations and especially for the private associations, most of which were accountable to a local board.

## Organizational Administrators' Attitudes Toward Cooperation in Rural Development Activities

The amount of organizational cooperation in their respective counties as perceived by the administrators varied only slightly and tended to be quite high. A large number of administrators felt that joint decision making in county development programs, joint participation in development action, invitations to participate in cooperative development efforts and joint activities were prevalent in their counties. The USDA administrators indicated a greater awareness of a cooperative system in their counties than did the state-county public organizations and the private associations.

Nearly all the administrators perceived a need for cooperative action in county development. There was strong agreement among administrators that collective effort is necessary to make a measureable change in quality of life, that collective activity will yield the best results, that development will be successful only when organizations learn to cooperate in pursuit of goals larger than their own, that

residents have a right to expect cooperation among development groups, and that each organization has a responsibility to contribute to larger development efforts. What variation existed among the administrators showed that those from private associations felt a little less strongly about the need for cooperative action. Generally, administrators of all groups indicated a willingness to become involved in joint development efforts in their counties.

County Rural Development Committees

The members of County Rural Development Committees were asked to specify the goals, benefits, methods of operation of the committee and to evaluate its success, as well as to suggest needed changes . The goals as defined by the members were mainly abstract and called for general improvement in the quality of life and improvement in life chances. A few administrators mentioned specific goals and some defined the goals in terms of their own organization's objectives.

The benefits of participation in the rural development committee system were identified and ranked by the administrators. Over 90 percent of the administrators mentioned that participation in the committee system enabled members to take a united stand, to improve exchange of information between organizations, to increase awareness of objectives of other organizations, and to provide a sounding board for ideas.

Committees were characterized as being smooth-running and decision making by unanimous consent was the most frequently mentioned style of operation. Controversial issues have occurred and were presented and discussed within the committee structure. Reports about the committee's operation also showed that a form of division of labor exists within the handling of issues. The responsibility for studying a particular issue was given to the organization most affected by a decision on that issue.

The evaluation of the Rural Development Committee by its members showed that member organizations go to great efforts to avoid creating problems for, or interfering with, other member agencies. A majority of the committee administrators also indicated that their committees were run smoothly. Although the operation of the committee can be characterized as compatible, the committees generally were not able to achieve a high degree of common focus in their efforts. Consequently, the effectiveness or success of the committees was given as "very good" to "outstanding" by a third of the sample.

Changes for improving the committee system were suggested by the administrators. Their recommendations related to changes that would be of greatest help to their organization and to the committee. The most common recommendation was the need for formal guidelines. Other suggestions for improvement included the need to expand the committee to include other

organizations in the county and the need to clarify the goals and objectives of the committees.

# CHAPTER 10

# IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In this final chapter we will suggest some of the implications of our findings for planning for cooperation relations among development organizations. The implications discussed in this section are designed to relate to planning for development in general, to methods for increasing cooperation among development groups, and to the operation of county rural development committees.

## General Versus Specific Guidelines

Our findings point up one of the attributes of federal or state initiated programs on local development efforts. When guidelines for local public agencies are given in general terms, the "starting-up time" for local programs can be expected to be slower than would occur if specific guidelines were given. The USDA rural development effort initiated in Washington is characterized by general guidelines. The guidelines given were very general when compared with the more specific directives (which detail acceptable conservation practices or qualifications for the granting of loans, or amount of payment for taking land out of production) that flow through USDA agencies. Additional time, therefore, is likely to be consumed by local administrators in their efforts to define what is included in rural development, in

their efforts to identify compatible groups in the community that should be part of the effort, or in their efforts to attract additional organizations into cooperative planning once they have been identified. Administrators may not be willing to spend this extra time if it means they have to take time away from other activities stressed by superiors. Part of the slowness with which the rural development effort has moved in some areas can be attributed to the general guidelines issued and the inability of or unwillingness of local public officials to work in program areas characterized by high uncertainty. The presence of higher administrative support for a more comprehensive approach to rural development, which goes beyond the established activities of individual public agencies, must also be recognized as an important factor in the success of any development program.

The absence of precise and commonly accepted guidelines for collective development efforts is likely to raise obstacles in the development process. When there is great latitude in defining objectives and approaches, the possibility of inconsistent programs is increased. Furthermore, intangible goals may lead to unrealistic expectations among administrators and client groups about what will change and at what rate this change will occur. Finally, evaluation of agency development programs is more difficult when administrators lack precise guidelines against which performance may

be judged.

Necessary Conditions for Cooperative Planning

Our findings indicated that rural development, either as a means or as an end, was often defined by administrators as more comprehensive than the scope of any single organization, and it often was viewed as broader than the programs offered by either the public or private sectors. One of the conclusions reached in our study may be described as follows: A necessary condition for comprehensive rural development is the participation by more than one organization in the development effort. We presented data that suggested organizations should be drawn from both the public and private sectors since organizations in each sector have something unique to contribute. The range of development activities cited by administrators also suggests the need for a more comprehensive approach than can be provided by any single agency. The types of activities described by administrators require more resources and skills than any single organization could supply.

The levels of current involvement and potential commitment to interagency development programs seem to suggest a general willingness to participate in development efforts. A large number of organizations not involved at present indicated a willingness to participate in interagency programs. The level of cooperation between public and private sectors could be high if our findings accurately represent the com-

mitments of the private sector.

The present level of interagency activity among the units studied also demonstrates that most local administrators recognize that they cannot work effectively in the development arena by themselves. Whether cooperation is due to administrative direction or to the demands of the situation is unimportant. What is important is that administrators at some level perceived the need for cooperative development programs.

Areas in which cooperative development planning may be established with the least amount of "set-up" time are those activities currently being performed by single organizations and those activities currently being addressed by interagency programs. If administrators responsible for development planning identify in a particular geographic area the groups participating in common issues and can help these groups see the potential for combining resources, ideas, and manpower, it may be possible to increase program success.

Interagency activities that are presently underway could be expanded if planners were aware of the programs that already exist in their county. Furthermore, groups participating in interagency programs could be a source of suggestions and technical assistance to any new attempts at planning. Understanding the assurances that will have to be given to secure cooperative action is a necessary condition for devel-

opment. Questions asked by administrators about interagency programs dramatize the importance of understanding program goals and objectives. Only when the goals of an interorganizational project are precisely defined will it be possible for an organization, which is invited to participate in a joint effort, to verify the compatibility of its goals with those of the cooperative program.

If interagency goals are not precise, it will be difficult to assess the requirements for staff or resource allocation, or to evaluate the overall responsibility and accountability a specific organization will have in the program.

Consensus about which organizations should be involved in development activities will affect the degree of cooperation among groups. Low levels of consensus will reduce the amount of cooperation in a group. Organizations attempt to "establish" themselves--to identify a programming effort, to identify a clientele, and to identify a problem arena in which they have special expertise. Unless all members in a committee agree that each should be involved, planning meetings may be spent trying to resolve the question about who should participate. A knowledge of which groups to involve also facilitates the expansion of present interagency systems. Thus, if a planner knew in advance which groups in the county other administrators expected to participate, he could seek out these groups and involve them without fear of

objections being raised by the present members.

Identification of Relevant Groups

Our research showed that USDA agencies tended to be the most frequently mentioned development groups. Other groups or organizations mentioned were political units, such as the county board of supervisors, and financial units, such as the county bankers' associations. Since these groups are present in all or nearly all the counties and since they were mentioned frequently, expansion of existing interagency development programs might seek to involve these groups or others like them. Adding these organizations will likely increase a development group's financial resources and its acceptance in the county, as well as provide an important link with other groups.

Planners should go further than identifying which organizations should be involved in development activities. They can ascertain which groups presently are involved. This could be done through a fairly simple questionnaire. This would reveal which groups are not involved but would be willing to participate. Such an inventory of organizations in a community, a county, or a region would reveal which organizations are not involved, which organizations feel they should be involved, and also what resources these groups would be willing to contribute. This type of survey could be an important tool in planning for joint programs since it would permit planners

to create a wide resource base for dealing with complex development problems.

Consensus on Development Priorities

Mobilization for development action may be reduced if public administrators, elected officials, and other influential leaders cannot agree on what are the most urgent problems. Our findings suggest that administrators often describe activities that they feel should be given priority in their county in terms of the programs offered by their own organizations. We also found that definitions of development and the types of development activities mentioned were associated with a particular organization. When priorities and needed programs are defined in terms of specific agencies, development planning will not likely assume a broad approach that cuts across organizational boundaries. Consequently, development may be slowed down when there is no wide-spread agreement about what areas should receive attention.

A survey of which organizations should be involved in each county is an important step in development planning. Such a survey could be expanded to ask information about the priorities of community leaders and public officials. Furthermore, if it is learned that little or no consensus exists about priorities, another step would be to develop an educational program to provide leaders with a description of the social, economic, and environmental conditions in their

county. A survey could be used to point out the problem areas and to increase the level of consensus about areas that need attention.

Organizational Characteristics

An organization's characteristics will influence its involvement in cooperative development programs. The number of years an organization has served residents in the county may affect its visibility and acceptance in the development arena. Relatively new organizations may not be accepted by groups that are well established in the area. The potential of many public and private organizations for participating in development may not be immediately obvious to organizations that are already well established in the development system, especially if they do not interact with these newer groups. Older groups in the county that have expressed a recent interest in rural development also may meet with resistence by established groups.

The amount of resources, the diversity of personnel, the range of programs, and freedom to participate in local programs can be expected to influence an organization's participation in joint development programs. The ability of an organization to participate in cooperative programs and its level of participation may be restricted if its financial resources are low. Organizations with a small staff may find it more difficult to allocate staff time to cooperative pro-

jects, whereas those with a large specialized staff may be able to make such an investment. Organizations with a narrow range of services may find it difficult to participate in cooperative efforts because of their more specialized interests. On the other hand, organizations with diversified programs (e.g., community action or welfare) may find it easier to enter into cooperative arrangements with other groups because of their wide range of interests. A local organization's freedom to initiate new programs, to alter existing ones, and to drop old programs also will affect its ability to participate in joint development efforts. When all decisions about programs are made by administrators at state and federal levels, the local unit, whether public or private can be expected to respond more slowly to invitations to join joint programs. Public or private organizations that are accountable to advisory boards at their own level can be expected to respond more quickly than those that are supervised by administrators several levels above them.

Attitudes held by administrators will likely affect their participation in cooperative development efforts. Cooperative development may be handicapped if administrators hold negative attitudes toward cooperative action. Whether by conscious decision or because of a lack of past participation in joint efforts, non-USDA administrators tend to hold less favorable attitudes toward cooperative action. Planners might

expect to find the impact and success of cooperative development programs reduced in areas where positive attitudes have not been developed and encouraged. The attitudes of local administrators may be shaped to a considerable extent by what area and state administrators do and say about rural development. There is high verbal commitment to cooperative action among all the administrators in our study, but their level of activity does not approach their level of verbal commitment. This may result in part because the state-county organizations and private associations have not been invited to participate in cooperative programs or because they do not presently feel cooperative effort is a necessary condition for organizational effectiveness.

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November 6, 1969

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Shortly after I became President, I established a new Cabinet-level Urban Affairs Council to help me develop an overall strategy for meeting the problems of the cities and to coordinate the wide variety of government efforts in this area. It is a fact of our national life that the concerns of rural America also deserve more careful consideration and more effective coordination at the highest levels of government.

We are a nation of cities, to be sure, but we are also a nation of small towns and villages, farms and forests, mines and ranches, mountains and rivers and lakes. The people who live in rural America have urgent problems which deserve our attention. More importantly, they represent a great resource upon which all of us can draw.

It is for these reasons that I am announcing today the establishment of a new Rural Affairs Council at the Cabinet level. The Council will meet next week for the first time. The following officials will join me as members of the Council: The Vice President, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors.

It is to this Council that the Task Force on Rural Development will submit its report and recommendations.

As I announce the formation of the Rural Affairs Council, I would note several facts which underscore the importance of its work. It is shocking, for example, to discover that at least one-third of the housing in rural America is presently substandard. It is disturbing to realize that more than 3 million rural Americans have not completed five years of school. It is disheartening to see that one-third of our rural communities with a population over 1,000 have no public sewage facilities.

It is also important to note that the population of our country is likely to grow by 50 percent in the next thirty years. Where these next hundred million persons locate is a tremendously important question for our society. After an era in which people have moved steadily from the countryside to large and crowded cities, we must now do what we can to encourage a more even distribution of our population throughout our country. The Rural Affairs Council can help our nation to meet this challenge by helping rural America, once again, to become an area of opportunity.

APPENDIX II

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM NO. 1667

Rural Development Program

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to establish the Department's policies and organizational arrangements with respect to economic, social and cultural improvement in the nonmetropolitan areas of the Nation.

This memorandum supersedes Secretary's Memorandum No. 1610, dated February 27, 1967, and all related instructions.

2. BACKGROUND

The President has established a Task Force on Rural Development to make recommendations on what might be done in the private and public sectors to stimulate rural development.

The President on November 6, 1969, announced the establishment of a Cabinet-level Council for Rural Affairs to recognize the importance of rural America to the national economy and to society. This Council is to assist the President in developing national policies that will strengthen rural America and thereby encourage increased dispersal of the U.S. population to areas outside the major metropolitan centers.

In addition to the President, the Rural Affairs Council includes the Vice President, the Secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Health, Education and Welfare, the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget and the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors.

The Department of Agriculture with its extensive field staff will carry a major portion of the Federal responsibility in helping individuals and communities in rural areas improve their quality of life.

3. DEFINITION

The term "rural development" applies to most of the present programs

of the Department, since they contribute directly or indirectly to the improvement of rural America. However, in this memorandum, rural development refers to the Department's special efforts to provide expanded farm and nonfarm employment, income opportunities, and more attractive living conditions in nonmetropolitan areas of the Nation.

4. POLICY

I ask each agency in the Department to give aggressive leadership and assistance to the rural development program. Our goal is to utilize our existing authorities to provide more jobs and income opportunities, improve rural living conditions, and enrich the cultural life of rural America.

Most details of the development process should be left to local determination. The approach of the Department is to assist people to help themselves. For those activities in which the Department has expertise and responsibility, it will provide direct services to communities and individuals. For activities beyond the Department's purview, the Department can serve as communicator and catalyst. However, development is the primary responsibility of the local people.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

National

The Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and Conservation represents the Secretary on rural development matters and administers the program within the department.

A Departmental Rural Development Committee is hereby established. This committee will develop Department policies, programs, and priorities, and coordinate agency action on matters pertaining to rural development. The Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and Conservation will serve as Chairman. The committee includes the Administrators and Deputies of the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Federal Extension Service, and Rural Electrification Administration and such other members as the Secretary may designate.

Each member agency will assign a person to provide staff services to the committee. Other agencies of the Department will be invited to meet with the committee from time to time as requested by the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and Conservation.

Each agency represented on the committee shall develop (1) procedures for providing services and technical assistance to individuals, private groups, and State and local governmental agencies; and (2) procedures for evaluating and reporting its progress in rural development to its Administrator. Other USDA agencies and offices shall develop plans for contributing to rural development. Rural development plans of all agencies shall be presented to the Chairman of the Rural Development Committee for review.

The Rural Development Committee will suggest training which will help Department and Extension personnel more effectively carry out their rural development responsibilities.

The Department, under the direction of the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development, will maintain liaison with other Federal agencies and national organizations to help make their programs and services available to rural people and their communities. This liaison function will be performed by the appropriate agencies as assigned by the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and Conservation.

State

There shall be a USDA Committee for Rural Development in each State. Membership shall include representatives from the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, and the State Cooperative Extension Service. Each representative will be designated by the corresponding administrator. This group shall be convened by the Director of the State Cooperative Extension and organized no later than December 31, 1969. Each Committee will elect its officers and develop its own operating procedures; it may enlarge its membership as it sees fit. Committee members will provide staff services to support the committee activities.

Each USDA Committee should establish liaison with the executive officers of the State governmental and other appropriate organizations. The Committees shall work closely with State and local people in support of comprehensive planning and development.

As needed, the State Committee will decide on the kind of USDA rural development organization to be established on a local basis.

The full range of land-grant university expertise, combined with help from Federal, State, and local government units, can assist local and State leaders to build strong and vigorous programs. Agency personnel, through their respective agencies, will provide technical assistance to individuals and to local, district, and State development groups. The State Cooperative Extension Services will, in addition, extend the knowledge and other available resources of land-grant universities to assist in the solutions of community problems. Extension will also provide educational and planning assistance to development groups, and along with other USDA agencies will help these groups use the various resources available through other governmental agencies and private organizations.

The State Committee, through its elected chairman, should develop an annual plan of operation for carrying out its responsibilities as indicated above. Each USDA agency administrator on the Rural Development Committee will prepare the necessary reports to be used as a basis for keeping national policies current and responsive to the needs of State and local people.

Local

Development is the responsibility of local organizations, groups, and leaders. They provide the means through which the services of governmental agencies and professional personnel can be of assistance. The extent to which people are helped in improving rural living conditions will depend largely on the quality of educational and technical assistance and other services provided by local professional personnel.

In assisting the local individuals and groups, local staff will (1) support and guide local leadership in determining the direction for development of its community, (2) provide appropriate help to local groups in carrying out their development plans, and (3) assist local leaders to establish appropriate liaison with other agencies and organizations, both public and private, who can contribute to the development of their communities.

J. Phil Campbell
Under Secretary

Cooperative Extension Service
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Ames, Iowa 50010

*Administrative Offices*
*Curtiss Hall*

April 21, 1970

To: Area Extension Directors

Dear Co-workers:

The Iowa State USDA Rural Development Committee approved the following guidelines for Area and County USDA RD Committees:

1. Provide a means of communication and joint consideration of rural development needs and suggest ways of increasing the effectiveness of each agency's program in meeting these needs.

   a. As a minimum, meet quarterly.

   b. Review agency programs on a county basis which contribute to rural development.

   c. Discuss and establish priority programs involving more than one agency.

   d. Develop plans for inter-agency coordination and cooperation on priority programs which contributes to rural development.

   e. Develop an annual written area or county RD committee plan of work. The plan of work will include the goals, who is to be involved, what is to be done and when.

2. Support and facilitate developmental activities of public and private organizations.

   a. Consider the organization of a broadly representative County Rural Development Committee.

   b. Be alert to emerging development projects and seek means to provide assistance within the framework of USDA programs.

   c. Assist organizations in study, analysis and the process of implementing development projects.

3. Assist individuals and communities in non-metropolitan areas to have improved access to programs of Federal, State and local agencies.

a. Keep informed of Federal, State and local agency programs.

b. Extend information to rural clientele about Federal, State and local agency programs.

c. Provide assistance to rural clientele in guiding them to appropriate agency offices to receive service from those programs.

4. Help to identify major rural development needs not being met by existing programs and suggest needed programs and resources to meet these needs.

5. Expand involvement of non-participants in USDA programs.

6. Extend information about USDA programs and their progress.

Six purposes are identified followed by guidelines as appropriate. These are suggestive, not exhaustive, in keeping with the concept of flexibility and initiative. Such a non-directive approach, however, does not suggest non-action.

The State USDA RD Committee proposes that the middle management personnel conduct training on these purposes and guidelines for their own personnel within the framework of each agency's in-service training program. In preparation for this, we will discuss these guidelines at the next Area Directors' meeting.

Sincerely,

Marvin A. Anderson
Dean and Director

MAA:jfk

cc: M. W. Soults